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*Art of Conversation and
Impromptu Speech*



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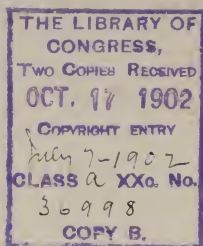
ART OF CONVERSATION AND IMPROMPTU SPEECH

A SHORT MANUAL OF PRACTICE

BY
HELEN SHERRY

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PREFACE.

After perusing my manuscript, my friend asked, with that reckless yielding to impulse, which is the privilege of social intimacy: "What are you going to do with it?"

"Why, publish it and sell it, of course. Then it will be introduced in all clubs and drawing rooms, and in all the schools in the country, public and private."

"You are very sanguine," rejoined my friend, coldly.

"Why, don't you believe in the pedagogic value of my system?"

"I have believed in it longer than you have. Twenty years ago, while reading Disraeli's 'Lothair,' I came across a passage in which one of the characters observed that the moderns were inferior to the ancients, intellectually and æsthetically, chiefly because they read much and conversed little, while with the latter the practice was reversed. Edu-

cation in Athens was all oral, objective, concrete. The philosophers talked; the poets read their poems aloud in the streets; the buildings, the statues, the pictures, all addressed the senses of the man as well as his understanding. The result of such education was eminently æsthetic and social. Our mental training, consisting of cabinet study, individual research, reading and writing, is subjective, solitary and savage, and tends, unfortunately, to enhance our congenital and already too great incapacity for social life on higher intellectual and æsthetic planes. I then saw, as never before, that a system of social culture was the great desideratum of our education."

"Well, then," I began—

"Ah, but," interrupted my friend, "it's not a question of what you or I think of the needs of our fellowmen. What *they* think is the main factor to be taken into account in estimating the chances of your practical success in the publication of your booklet. You're surely not doing this for your health?"

"No, but for the health of my countrymen. If my little work has merit, will it not be recognized?"

"As, in my quality of author, I am tolerably well acquainted with the romantic history of rejected manuscripts, I can assure you that, while the merit of a work certainly en-

hances its chances of acceptance and of sale, it does not by any means ensure either."

"Give me all your reasons."

"Well, put yourself in the publisher's place. Expenses must be paid and, while merit may be postulated as a prerequisite, yet his final attitude towards the enterprise will be mainly determined by another consideration, *i. e.*, the salability. That is business, you know."

"I don't feel barred by that argument. My book will sell."

"That remains to be seen. It has certainly better chances of sale today than it would have had ten or even five years ago. But you are addressing a public of educators, and you know what Prof. Blackie said of teachers—that they are the most unteachable of all classes."

"That may be true of the rank and file. But superintendents, principals, and all those who are invested with the power of introducing reforms, surely these have their high office sufficiently at heart to investigate the claim of one who proposes a new and valuable idea in education."

"Of course, they are all conscientious according to their lights and the bias of their temperaments, which inclines them to emphasize, one, this thing, and the other that. All of them are proceeding on a considerable basis of right rea-

son, but each has only one small ray of truth within the range of his vision, and, in most cases, seems to think that the triumph of his claims involves the defeat of the claims of others. If there could be a little more hospitality shown by educators to ideas that are foreign to their own trend of thought, a happier future would be ensured for those who are offering valuable contributions to educational method. Do you know anything of the history of educational reforms up to date?"

"Alas, yes! It is melancholy enough for the most part. But, among the improvements of the public mind in our day is a more liberal point of view. People are more ready to listen to new ideas. I believe that every honest teacher who reads me will be convinced that my scheme of language study is excellent."

"But to convince themselves of that your public would have to test it for themselves, and the universal cry is that there is no room in the already overcrowded curriculum for experiments."

"O; I have groaned under the tyranny of the curriculum. Besides the intrinsic merit of my idea, it has the advantage of illustrious authority. Sir Humphrey Davy says: 'Language is not only a vehicle of thought—it is a great and efficient instrument of thinking.' Now, this sentence alone

should long ago have aroused the eager curiosity of all teachers who read it. That which is an instrument of thinking certainly teaches one to think. Is not this the immemorial desideratum of the schools? It is very easy to refer glibly to teaching the young idea how to shoot, but what true teacher does not feel that that is the one elusive thing in all his aims and purposes? To combine ideas and perceptions into the product called thought is the most delicate of all tasks, difficult to achieve for oneself, and still more difficult to impart to others. The exercises in definition and in the discrimination of synonyms alone accomplish this. I discovered that what Sir Humphrey Davy meant was that straining the power of the mind to achieve expression accurate enough to meet the exigencies of scientific thought actually increased many times the power of thought itself. That is the golden reward of conscientious expression. He who strives to clothe the thought he has just acquired in perfectly fitting garments of expression, acquires thereby sufficient additional vigor of faculty immediately thereupon to conceive a new thought. This, however, was only the discovery of a fact. The task remained of making this fact the principle of a practical scheme of language study. The difficulty lay in ascertaining what thoughts the pupil needed to express. This was, in the ordinary course of life, revealed only as ac-

casion disclosed the necessity of conveying what was going on in the mind. If adequate terms failed to present themselves when summoned by the emergency, there was nothing to do but to record a failure and pass on to new emergencies that were followed by new failures, thus making of human speech an almost unbroken series of verbal blunders. It soon became clear that the only solution of the problem lay in factitiously procuring opportunity for expression. Just at that moment I made another discovery, namely, that the faculty of conceiving and entertaining ideas far outstripped that of expressing these ideas. The power of expression halted far behind that of conception, so that consciousness teemed with unexpressed thoughts that waited only for the ministry of language to clothe and send them out into the world. Now, my perplexity, on being called upon to define words whose meaning I well know, had disclosed this fact to me, and I now availed myself of it to frame a scheme of exercises that should procure for the student of language the opportunity of bringing into play his faculty of verbal expression. Four years' experience has convinced me of the supreme value of this exercise as a stimulant of mental power. If it be true, as is universally conceded, that the test of the value of any class of studies as discipline is found in its

tendency to increase the working power of the mind, this work in expression is unsurpassed."

"Yes, you might succeed in getting them to test your plan of oral language study, but you have given your book the title of *Conversation*. Personally, I think it appropriate, but I fear you count without an idiosyncrasy of the Anglo-Saxon mind. Your American or Englishman would gladly welcome the reputation of fine conversational gifts, but he would feel an instinctive recoil from the deliberate study of conversation. A lurking apprehension that it might not be solid enough would give him pause, and in some instances actually deter him from embarking in a study that would appear to him too agreeable to be profound. You will have to prove to him that it is of transcendent educational value before he will touch it with a ten-foot pole in the school-room. Don't forget the ascetic leaven in the descendants of the Puritans, whatever you do!"

"I thought I had provided for that in the assumption that DeQuincey's fine essay on *Conversation* was universally known. This is in itself a revelation of the mystery of the interaction of the human units in social intercourse. That conversation itself has a high disciplinary value may be gathered from the following extract: 'Lord Bacon has been led to remark the capacities of conversation as an organ for

sharpening one particular mode of intellectual power. Circumstances, on the other hand, led me into remarking the special capacities of conversation as an organ for absolutely creating another mode of power. Let a man have read, thought, studied, as much as he may, rarely will he reach his possible advantages as a *ready* man, unless he has exercised his powers much in conversation'—that was Lord Bacon's idea. * * * * On the contrary, my own growing reveries on the latent powers of conversation pointed to an absolute birth of new insight into the truth itself as inseparable from the finer and more scientific exercise of the talking art. It would not be the brilliancy, the ease, or the adroitness of the expounder, that would benefit, but the absolute interests of the thing expounded. A feeling dawned upon me of a secret magic lurking in the peculiar life, velocities, and contagious ardors of conversation quite separate from any which belonged to books; arming a man with new forces, and not merely with new dexterity in wielding the 'old ones. I felt, and in this I could not be mistaken, as too certainly it was a fact of my own experience, that in the electric kindling of life between two minds, . . . in its momentary coruscation of shifting phases, there sometimes arise glimpses and shy revelations of affinity, suggestion, relation, analogy, that could not have been approached through any avenues of methodical study.

“Now, if there lurks a new and specific mental power in conversation, it is the function and office of pedagogy to ferret it out and avail itself of it to the utmost extent. The educational world is not so rich in resources that it can afford to allow these announcements of new and unexploited mines to pass unnoticed. ‘This business of conversation is a very serious matter,’ says the autocrat of the breakfast table. ‘Besides,’ he continues, ‘there is another thing about this talking which you forget. It shapes our thoughts for us; the waves of conversation roll them as the surf rolls the pebbles on the shore. Let me modify the image a little. I rough out my thoughts in talk as an artist models in clay.’ Here, also, is clearly indicated the effect of colloquy on the manipulation of thought. Emerson says: ‘Conversation is the main function of life.’ In more than one passage he waxes eloquent on its lofty ministry in the elevation and refinement of existence, placing it at the very summit of the prizes of life. Surely these men suffered, at the moment of such expressions as those quoted above, no lapse of the wisdom for which they are so universally esteemed. A process in which these men have discerned such possibilities is certainly entitled to the honor at least of thorough test at the hands of teachers of our youth, in order that in the race of life they may not be driven to the bitter complaint of

Count Cavour, who lamented that he had not been taught speaking and composing in youth while his organs were flexible. The school that would inaugurate the system of teaching the arts and sciences by Conversation would crown the world with a new and lofty benefaction that would repeat with increased effectiveness the triumphs of the past. The most successful schools of the world were the oral. The schools of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Jesus, illustrated the advantages of the colloquial method, and showed the world what can be accomplished by the living word dropping like a coal of fire into the soul, embedding itself forever there. It was in the oral schools which the women of the French salons held in their gilded drawing-rooms that the explosive idea of human rights was rolled and polished till it burst like a bomb-shell and shook the world with its thunders. It was in the oral schools of Bronson Alcott and Margaret Fuller that the notorious culture of Boston took its rise, and it will be in the oral schools of the Colloquial Renaissance, which we are about to see, that our higher culture will be recast in molds whose chief shaping agencies shall have been social sympathy and social inspiration."

"Bravo, my dear; you are well buttressed by the authority of literary eminences, but is it not too soon to press this

intellectual socialism upon a race that has not yet got beyond the stage of pride in its riotous individualism?"

"It is never too soon to deliver one's life-message, whatever betide. Think of the long preliminary work. Think of the years that must be spent merely in diffusing ideas and erecting ideals. It is two thousand years since the Sermon on the Mount was delivered, yet how many even now, when smitten on one cheek, turn the other also?"

"God speed you, but I fear you will have to wait a weary long time for the fruition of your hopes."

"I will wait."

THE AUTHOR.

PART I.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION.

As the main sources of the incapacity for conversation are insufficient familiarity with the use of words and inadequate mental training, a course in oral language must be pursued as a preliminary to exercise in conversation. But, as classes are usually eager to embark immediately in conversation, it has been customary with the present writer to give exercises in colloquy proper from the beginning of the course. At first this was viewed in the light of a concession to the rather unwise clamor of the pupils, but subsequent experience has fully established the wisdom of the measure. Talking is like swimming; you must begin by floundering in the element you are to master. The new methods of learning foreign languages have their origin in a similar persuasion. Therefore, exercise in oral language work is carried on abreast with actual conversation.

As an exercise for training the mind in readiness and accuracy of thought definition is pursued on an extensive scale, and is continued throughout the course.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITION.

Locke knew what he was about when he delivered the injunction: "Be careful to define your terms."

This practice has two admirable results. In the first place, by clearly determining the sense in which words are used, the speaker or writer forestalls much profitless discussion arising from confusion in the acceptation of terms. In the second place, being mentally one of the most strengthening of processes, it gives the mind great vigor and agility both in thought and expression. If one is interested in ascertaining the efficiency of his mental faculties let him acquire the habit of calling upon himself to define the abstract terms he mostly glibly uses in his daily speech as, for example, culture, temperament, spirituality. He will then be astonished to find that his mind, that engine of which he is

so proud, is not an airy-winged creature flitting about whither it lists, but a poor crippled horse in a treadmill moving slowly and painfully in grooves which confine its activity. The human mind is unfortunately imprisoned within the grooves of the habitual in thought and infinitely more so in expression. The moment it tries to step out of the circle of the accustomed in language it stumbles and flounders in hopeless impotency. Even people of intelligence fail to attach to this phenomenon the importance it deserves. Its universality blinds men to its ominous significance and to the shame which it reflects on our methods of mental training. The individual who is incapable of defining the terms he uses is deficient in mental training; for definition is a supreme test of the power of intellectual initiative. It is an intellectual exercise, and if the faculties were in good working condition this exercise would be accomplished with ease and rapidity. The fact that as a rule it cannot be accomplished at all, even by the average university student, should long ago have opened the eyes of pedagogic leaders to the defects of present mental training and have driven them to seek methods by which the mind of the young might receive the power of swift and free activity instead of remaining chained to the grooves of habit. Definition, then, is our means of conferring upon our subjects the power of

free locomotion and emancipating them from the leading strings of custom.

The class is called upon to give impromptu definitions of words. The strength which the mind acquires by this process will soon be apparent to the intelligent student. Let the teacher begin by calling the attention of the class to the elastic nature of the elements of language, words meaning now one thing and now another. As an illustration of this quality of language the word *life* may be taken. The teacher will embody the term in a sentence and call upon each member of the class to define it as used in the sentence given.

Ex.—Life is hard for the transgressor.

The sum of the ideas contained in the definitions given by the class, when winnowed of errors, would probably be that

Life is the space of time which elapses between the birth and death of an individual with especial reference to the personal vicissitudes which form its historic content.

The foregoing is suggested by the writer, not as a prescription, but as an example which is humbly submitted for the sake of exposition. The teacher, in collaboration with the pupils, often succeeds in framing much better definitions

than can be found even in standard dictionaries. This affords great delight to the class and becomes the source of profound intellectual interest and improvement.

Then the teacher may submit another use of the same word :

Farrar's Life of Christ.

Definitions will also be given of this use of the word. The word as used here will no doubt be found to mean the *history or account of the personality, and of the events attending the career of the subject in question.*

A third example :

That was painted from life.

Life here would mean *a living object.*

This would again be the result of submitting the definition of this use of the word to the class as a problem in language. These are really all language problems, and have a more decided effect in sharpening the intellect than problems in mathematics, because in mathematics the pupil simply follows a rule already framed for him ; in the language problem he is thrown on his own intellectual initiative.

He leads an evil life, might be used as a fourth example and defined *the moral circumstances of a subject, as revealing moral character.*

Indeed, this word is susceptible of from twelve to fifteen definitions. A feat of ingenuity might be required of the class, namely, to construct a sentence or a paragraph containing the word in all its various acceptations, and then to define the word rapidly according to its meaning in each one of the various uses. This would sharpen the discriminating power.

One great defect of the untrained modern mind is lack of perceptive power united to lack of the power of describing accurately the objects perceived. To remedy this, daily call should be made upon the class for description of objects brought under their vision. For example, hold up the hand and ask the pupils first to define hand in general and then to give a description of the particular hand held out to their view. This will be seen to demand the fullest exercise of the perceptive powers on the one hand and on the other of recording in expression or language the content of the consciousness. Let the teacher and pupils criticise the account given of the object until no defect occurs in the description or the definition.

The teacher should be careful to exact a correct formula for the definitions. Thus, insist on the introduction of the definition by a definite prediction classifying the object to be defined.

Example :

1. A chair is an *object* which, etc.
2. Dyeing is a *process* which, etc.
3. Misery is a *state*, etc.
4. To strike is an *action*, etc.
5. Memory is a *faculty*, etc.

Call especial attention to the faculties involved in these exercises. Train the pupils to see that defining in this way consists in straining the perceptive powers to analyze the content of consciousness and the expressive power to give a transcript of this content in language—a most valuable and strengthening discipline. To illustrate this take the words *to dye* and *to shoot*. The class will begin by defining to shoot as an *action*; they will probably designate *to dye* as an action also. At the teacher's appeal for reconsideration as to the latter, some member of the class will probably suggest *process* instead of *action*. This substitute will receive the teacher's approval, who will call upon the class to give the difference between a *process* and an *action*. The class will at first probably venture the assertion that a *process* is a kind of *action*. When pressed to explain what kind of an action it is, probably no one will be able to give answer. The teachers should then ask the class if the word *process* could not be applied to anything that was done under certain cir-

cumstances. After some reflection the class would undoubtedly recognize the less general nature of the term. After putting in parallel words representing processes, and words representing single actions, there will always be at least one pupil in the class who will explain that a *process* consists of a *series of actions*. Then let the pupils frame a full definition. Should they say merely that a process is a series of actions, then ask them if to strike a number of times, performing the action each time in one and the same manner, would constitute a process? The answer would undoubtedly be *no*, for this would immediately enable them to see that an important element had been omitted. Then ask them to name some particular process, after which tell them to compare the process with the mere succession of similar actions. At this stage of the exercise most of the class will discover that a process is not a mere succession of similar actions, but a number of actions differing from each other but all converging towards the same foreseen and desired end.

This process may be reversed and the definition of a word be given without pronouncing the word itself. To discover this will be the work of the class. This is at once an extremely interesting and profitable exercise and the requisite complement of the preceding one. This will inculcate the

habit of synthesis, while the other serves to train the mind in analysis.

For example say to the class: "Give the word of which the following sentence is the definition:"

The whole system of means by which a state is maintained.

After a little reflection it will appear plain to them that *government* is indicated, and they will say so. Should they hesitate too long the teacher might frame another definition of the same word. It is a strange but undeniable fact that oftentimes of two equally clear, adequate, and simple definitions one will appear as an impenetrable cloud to the mind of an individual, while the other, owing to some unfathomed trick of association, will throw a flood of light upon the faculties. Every teacher in language will make this experience. To give another example:

The appointed action of any organ, or

The peculiar action which any organ performs.

The class will soon see that *function* is meant.

A third example will no doubt suffice to show how this exercise should be conducted.

Strict attention to conventional rules, or

Undeviating compliance with the rules of social process.

This will soon appear to be *formality*.

CHAPTER II.

SYNONYMS.

If the exercise of definition gives the mind vigor and agility, the discrimination of synonyms imparts to it the inestimable qualities of subtlety and delicacy.

Synonyms being words which coincide with each other in the essential elements of meaning and differ in the minor ones, the process of differentiating them brings into activity the acutest powers of thought.

Let the synonyms *taste* and *talent* be taken for illustration.

What is the definition of *taste*? The class will not very readily define this. It is likely that after careful reflection some one will suggest that it is a faculty of the mind which consists in the power of judging or discriminating. Select then some homely process, as the setting up of a kitchen

stove, and ask the class whether this process would give scope to the power of judgment (for instance, as to whether the pipe were straight). The answer would be *yes*. Ask now whether the faculty of taste would be involved. The answer would certainly be *no*. Then put to the class questions concerning subjects of the fine arts. The pupils will forthwith agree that such subjects give scope to the exercise of the faculty of taste. This will lead them to see that by calling taste simply a faculty of judgment they had given the word undue extension, and that when properly restricted it would mean the power of judgment in æsthetic matters.

Now ask for the definition of *talent*. Some will pronounce it exactly vicarious with *taste*; others will feel a distinction which they cannot express. Give them a sentence containing *talent*, as for instance: *He has talent for music*. Ask the class what *talent* means here. The substance of the answers will assuredly be that it refers to a measure of ability in some department of activity. Accept this and then collate the two words as synonyms. If the pupils can not at once discriminate between them, remind them of their definitions in virtue of which *ability*, which implies the power of doing or executing, is assigned to one term, and the power of judging merely is assigned to the other. When the class has agreed unanimously, as it very likely will, that *talent* is

the power of *executing*, and *taste* the power of *judging*, in matters of æsthetic excellence, submit the sentence: *She has taste in dressing*, as applied to a woman who is the author of her own toilets, and ask the class whether *taste* here implies mere discrimination, or whether it refers to executive or creative power in the department in question. They will be a little perplexed to find that the word they thought they had accurately defined now presents itself under a new aspect. They must then be told that *taste* which, rigorously constructed, implies merely the power of *discerning* is, in popular parlance, allowed to encroach upon the confines of *talent*. In the same way we say that one who decorates a table well has a *taste* for such decorative work, when *talent* is plainly indicated by reference to the power of *doing*. These instances will be shown to be illustrations of the principle of elasticity that is one of the most interesting characteristics of organic language, and which would be found to be utterly lacking in Volapuk or any mechanically contrived mode of speech. *Genius* and *talent* could then be compared, showing *genius* to be a property of the mind differing from *talent*, not only in degree but also in kind. An interesting discussion and consequently a spirited conversation is likely to ensue in the consideration of this subject. The teacher must not check the conversation as would be done

in any other class. Indeed, it must always be a matter of gratulation that the talk is well under way. This is the teacher's opportunity for observing the merits and defects of each pupil as they reveal themselves in unpremeditated discourse. The colloquial characteristics thus coming to light must be noted for future reference and impersonal suggestions designed for correction. Above all let the teacher note the degree in which each pupil uses his imagination as manifested either in wit, humor, comparison, allusion, figures of rhetoric, or a peculiar quality of quaintness which sometimes shows itself in the speech of some persons. This will enable the teacher to take an inventory of the material with which he has to work. Errors of all orders will be noted and corrected later on and impersonally, as the interruption of a pupil to correct him invariably throws a damper on his spirits, and for a space eclipses his faculties. Therefore, let the temptation to bring the discussion to a close be strenuously resisted, especially at first, for it is of the utmost importance that the *personnel* of the class early betray what lurks in them. Whether errors of pronunciation and syntax should be corrected in the conversation class is a matter which must be left entirely to the ordinance of circumstance. In a school where the pupils are young and

still generally agree to consider their exercises in all departments as subject to correction, these little points should be redressed. In private classes the question should be submitted to the class, and even then much tact is requisite to correct faults without ruffling the susceptibilities of sensitive souls. It is one thing to assent to a policy of correction, and quite another to stand bravely under the assault of one's personal vanity or the defeat of one's intellectual pretensions.

CHAPTER III.

ANTONYMS.

As a complement to the exercise in synonyms we have that of antonyms. The foregoing exercise may be judiciously supplemented by the teacher's calling out a word and requiring of the class to give all the synonyms of it that occur to them. There must be no pause until the possibilities are exhausted. For instance, the teacher might pronounce the word *scold*. Following this lead the class would call out in turn, *chide*, *rebuke*, *reprove*, *reprehend*, *reprimand*, etc. Now, closely upon this exercise that of antonyms should follow. The definition of antonym should first be given, namely, the word which is directly the opposite of another in meaning. The teacher might then utter the word *virtuous*—the class would say *wicked* or *vicious*. Antonyms of *induce* (i. e., *deter*), of *deprive* (i. e., *endow*), to *delight* (i. e.,

horrify), might be called for. Then name the corresponding nouns and call for their antonyms, as *inducement*, *deterrent*; *deprivation*, *endowment*, etc. It is requisite even for advanced classes to begin with the simplest concrete terms and gradually ascend to the less simple and more abstract ones—from the more to the less familiar ones.

CHAPTER IV.

ALTERATION OF PARTS OF SPEECH.

That familiarity with language which implies the ready passing from one part of speech to another made on the same root or united to it by meaning is one rarely met with even among our intelligent classes. This enables one to condense one's sentences by reducing predication; and also to avoid tautology.

Ex.—*I promised to do all I could for them; indeed, all that winter I did do all I could for them, but now, etc.*

Say, rather, *I promised to do all I could for them. Indeed that winter I did help them to the extent of my ability, but now, etc.*

If you have to speak about the poor no longer *caring about their homes and families as much as formerly* and your arguments require a repetition of this thought, to vary the

expression, refer to the *decay of the domestic affections among the lower classes.*

A lady on the floor of a club once said: "*Mrs. X. says she is sorry for what she said about the measure I proposed, but I don't believe she is sorry, for she, etc. Now if she wants me to believe that she is sorry, she ought to, etc.*"

Now she repeated the phrase *she is sorry* until the nerves of the ear were contracted by a spasm under the impact of the unvarying sound. It ought not to have been difficult for her if she had any command whatever of her mother tongue now to refer to the *lady's regret* and now to *question the genuineness of the lady's penitence, etc.*

These are not merely small matters of taste, they easily become questions of humanity. You have no more right to make a person suffer by the monotony of your expressions than you have to inflict any other mode of pain upon him. If you are moved by no personal ambition for excellence, you are still bound to consider the sensibilities of others.

The degree of sensibility to such things is confessedly a measure of refinement.

CHAPTER V.

VOCABULARY.

As the chief obstacle to a ready flow of language lies in an insufficient command of terms, one of the most urgent needs is that of vocabulary extension. A word of caution is here seasonable. There is a trait in the Anglo-Saxon temperament which instinctively recoils from deliberate study of words. A false sense that there lies in such pursuit an element of vanity and affectation seems to haunt like a phantom the Puritan mind. It is a relic of the old, unlovely asceticism that led our colonial forefathers to frown down on art, mirth, beauty in costume and appointments, on compliments, gallantry, and the courtesies of life. It does not appear inconsistent to the American to have an unbounded reverence for the laws of grammar which control the forms of words and to neglect utterly to acquire a command of those

words for practical use. People will ask with an ill-disguised sneer whether you are going to study the dictionary. Answer promptly that you intend to do so and, that too, strenuously. Rufus Choate, Emerson, Holmes, Balzac and nearly all truly great men of letters have borne strong and cheerful testimony to the absorbing interest of mere words. The term *words* is often used to denote that which, compared with action, is false or unmeaning. Words are never unmeaning. They are symbols of thought, and he who deals advisedly with words deals with thoughts. He, who acquires a new word, as a rule, acquires a new thought. Therefore, much stress must be laid on the importance of increasing the number of terms at the command of the subject. Those Puritanic minds who take a superficial view of the matter deprecate the deliberate study of words for fear that, as the flow of words increases, the stock of thoughts will decrease. Now, a little investigation will convince any one that our thoughts at all times far outnumber our words—that we always have on hand more mental material than power to express it. A proof of this is the inability of any one, however skillful in the use of language, to make an absolutely true word-picture of anybody. Yet, every feature that eludes the grasp of expression is a distinct image or idea, and a subject for verbal transcript, if only language could

attain to it. We harbor an unlimited list of ideas which have long since become commonplaces of inward thought, but which have never received the sacrament of expression. The task of the teacher is here a delicate one. He must invent some means for testing the pupil's power of expression, or more strictly speaking, of concise expression; for many thoughts are conveyed by unnecessarily circuitous methods. A pupil who could not tell her teacher whether she had ready use of language or not, said in a narrative undertaken for the purposes of test, that the hero had by night *not yet gotten to where he wanted to go*, thus proving that she was unfamiliar with the simple term *destination*. Thus, instead of leading to verbosity, command of language gives the power of being concise by enabling one to put a single word in the place of a whole sentence. Circumlocution of the kind noted above is the characteristic fault of little children, and of all those who are inexpert in verbal expression. The sagacious teacher will make her pupils embark in some narration and keep a sharp lookout for such awkward circumlocutions, make a note of them, and subsequently repeat them to the pupils and seek to lead them by their own efforts to discover more concise substitutes for their too round about phrases. This process will come under the head of reduction of predication—a tendency which characterizes the evolu-

tion of language. This consists in reducing the number of sentences and substituting nouns, adjectives, or particles for them. Children are apt to speak something after this fashion: "Papa gave me a book; it's a big book. I keep my pictures in it." It takes considerable practice in language to teach them to condense these three independent predication into one, so that they say: "Papa gave me a big book in which I keep my pictures." As simple as this sentence is it indicates progress in the use of language, because it involves economy of means, the principle of evolution, and progress in all the arts. Now, people who are untrained in the use of language are liable to commit the same errors of construction. The language of ordinary oral narration teems with these superfluously multiplied predication. To test the truth of this assertion one has but to listen to the first drawing-room account of a dream, a trip, or an accident that is unfolded before him. He will be astonished at the repetitions of conjunctions and verbs, at the undue multiplication of small sentences, and the manifold awkwardness of expression revealed.

Let us illustrate by a transcript from a class exercise. A pupil is recounting a dream in order to afford a test of his narrative powers:

“I dreamed last night I heard the fire bells ring, and I thought I got up and dressed and I thought I went out and saw a big blaze in the distance toward the south. I thought it was in the direction of the university. As my mother and sister live out in that quarter I felt an impulse to rush out to the scene of the accident with all haste. And I thought I impelled myself forward with all my might, but I thought I did not seem to myself to make any headway. I thought I looked about me and beheld a great throng on the street, and I thought I was surprised to see everybody walking as leisurely as if they were out for a moonlight promenade. I thought they did not betray the least excitement and I thought they were all dressed in deep mourning and that they all had a solemn air like people going to a funeral. I thought this began to have a wierd effect upon me. And I thought what made it worse was that I was tortured with the idea of my not being able to get on any faster, although I exerted myself to my utmost. I thought I felt a sort of tearing in the inside of me, produced by my straining to get forward, but I thought I felt my feet dragging themselves painfully, one after the other, as if they were made of lead. This produced in me a sense of torture impossible to describe. Then I thought I saw the engine and the rest of the fire apparatus come along, but I thought they moved along

heavily and slowly, as if they too formed part of a funeral train."

We need not continue. For our purpose let it suffice to point out that it is an American idiosyncrasy to dot the recital of a dream with the repeated phrase "I thought." With other peoples it suffices to open the relation with the announcement that it is a dream. The subjectivity of the matter and the contingency of the actions and sentiments are thereafter steadily kept in mind without further formal reminder.

It will be observed that the conjunction "and" is also redundantly used. Otherwise the narrative presents a pretty fair example of the way even intelligent people use language for the practical purposes of life. It will suffice at first to eliminate the grossest and most frequently recurring errors of diction, and reserve the inculcation of niceties for a more advanced stage of discipline.

One very effective means of increasing the vocabulary is to read a passage to a pupil, asking him to call for a pause as soon as you pronounce a word which he has not mastered colloquially. To explain the last phrase let us begin by calling the reader's attention to the fact that the average person has three vocabularies—one available in reading, another in writing, and a third in speaking. The first consists of all the

words on the written page which the subject recognizes and understands; the second of such words as he can command when writing, which is much smaller than the preceding, and the last of such words as he has sufficiently mastered to use them in his conversation, which vocabulary is by far the narrowest of all. The problem of the sagacious student of language will be to merge the three vocabularies into one. To this end he will strive to convert all the words of his reading vocabulary into elements of the talking vocabulary. This must be done systematically, namely, by converting to colloquial use all the familiar words one finds on the written page. It is objected to this by a certain class of critics that there will be danger of undue attention being given to words, with the result that the importance of thought will be overlooked. This certainly cannot be the case where it is sought to use in talking only such words as one already knows when bound on the written page. For to know a word is simply to possess the thought of which the word is but the symbol. Neither can this be the case, even where the pupil is led to add to his vocabulary a word whose meaning was previously unknown to him for, before he can make any use of a word in his talk, he must thoroughly grasp the idea for which it stands. Let us hasten to prove this. To take first a case where the meaning of

the word is well known when found written, but has not become an organ of the subject's oral language.

The following case is a transcript of the present writer's own experience in a conversation class. The teacher is the first speaker :

T.—*Mrs. Beals, interrupt me when I come to a word whose meaning you know, but of which you have not yet made use in talking:*

“He hesitated to propose marriage so long as he felt his subsistence so precarious in—”

Mrs. Beales.—“I know the word precarious, but it has never occurred to me to use it in my daily conversation, and yet it is plainly a very useful word. I think that whenever hitherto I have had occasion to express that quality I have used the word *uncertain*.”

T.—“*Uncertain* is, indeed, given as a synonym of *precarious*, and yet its etymology shows it to be the symbol of quite another property. Originally it means simply *uninformed*; that is, a thing is *uncertain* when you are not sure that it exists at all. A thing is *precarious* which does, indeed, exist or subsist, but of which it is *uncertain* how long it will continue to be. The happiness of a friend whom I have not seen for a long time is *uncertain* (i. e., I am uninformed of it), but my own happiness is *precarious* because

it is contingent on the health of my son who is very liable to illness." The use of *uncertain* for *precarious* is, indeed, authorized but it adds to one's power of discrimination to use the more specialized term.

Mrs. Beals was then summoned to construct sentences in which the word might be correctly used, as—The tenure of an invalid's life is very *precarious*, the triumph of the gambler is *precarious*, etc.

This exercise was continued until the subject declared that she had mastered the word for daily use.

During the same lesson, one lady stopped the reader at the word *allege*, and another at the word *invalidate*. Sentences were given to illustrate both terms, and finally one sentence was constructed which contained both words within a narrow compass, as follows: *The facts you allege do not invalidate my doctrine.*

The fact that it transpires in these exercises that many who fancy they know the meaning of a word, really comprehend it but feebly, shows the great value of this sort of discipline. A valuable exercise consists in presenting to the class an idea clothed in its most elementary form and request the pupils each in turn to render the idea in other words, gradually reducing the prediction until the idea has attained its most adequate, i. e., at once its most correct and most concise form.

CHAPTER VI.

ANALYSIS OF WIT AND HUMOR AS LANGUAGE DISCIPLINE.

The analysis of traits of wit and humor constitutes an invaluable discipline in the pursuit of language as a vehicle of expression and as an instrument of thinking. The simplest pleasantry will often present the greatest difficulties to him who seeks to formulate its analysis in adequate terms.

A few examples will suffice to illustrate this proposition. For the first we will take an ordinary newspaper clipping :

BIRDS OF A FEATHER.

Beg pardon, sir; but who are you?

I am the husband of Mrs. Lease of Kansas, and you?

I am the husband of the Infanta Eulalia of Spain.

Shake!

The most uncultivated reader instantly grasps the humor

of the passage and smiles at its perusal. He understands it, therefore, thoroughly; but ask him to explain the facetia, to state in clear, definite terms the principle on which the pleasantry reposes, and in nearly every case you will find him at a loss for adequate expression. Examine the passage well yourself, and you will readily see that it constitutes quite a problem in language, and is more difficult of solution than a problem of arithmetic or algebra could be to one who had given ordinary study to these sciences.

Take this other example:

Wine Merchant: Could you paint me a picture that would fill out this space on the wall of my store and symbolically illustrate my business for the benefit of the public?

Painter: Why, certainly! Say Christ at the marriage feast at Cana, changing water into wine.

An explanation of the motives which underline these two bits of pleasantry will prove an excellent exercise in language. It will first of all require strenuous exercise in thinking to get the idea clearly engraved on the mind, then the mind will be as strenuously occupied in seeking language which shall perfectly express the idea. This will immediately show to what an extent the neglect of oral language has robbed us of all command of spontaneous speech, and how much it has paralyzed the activity of thought itself. We do

so much automatic thinking that we have greatly impaired the vigor and clearness of our thought. Excepting always the commonest daily mental processes which we go through unconsciously, everything in our mind is vague. We never stop to take account of our intellectual process, but our cerebration take place by an automatic routine, like the processes in the brain of the brute creation. The dignity of our nature demands that we should vigorously resume the glorious power of initiative of which our rude forefathers gave such edifying proof when they invented language at all. We should create for ourselves the opportunity for new experiences in verbal expression. Such opportunity is presented by the present exercises. The reader who studies these two examples of *facetiae* with a view first to analyzing them, and then to giving expression to the analysis, will recognize, as he never did before, how lame are his processes of thought and speech. But he will at least be thrown on his own initiative, and freedom in the use of language will begin for him. The exercises will richly repay the pains they cost by giving him an insight into real methods by which habits of clear and logical thought are fostered, and the power of accurate expression is formed. Let us tackle the problem together.

The motive of the first pleasantry, which is rather of

humor than of wit, illustrates the sense of humiliation which is traditionally ascribed to the unknown husbands of well-known women. Their union in a handshake suggests their recognition of the proverb that misery loves company. The æsthetic sense is moreover stirred by the subtleness with which all that we have said in the analysis is implied in a single syllable—i. e., *Shake!* The artistic sense is always gratified by the skillful adaptation of means to ends, and in artistic process, economy, and adequacy, are the two factors. The mind is delighted at seeing *multum in parvo*.

The motive of the second witticism lies in the surprise caused by the unexpected intrusion of the sarcasm lurking in the subject chosen by the painter. When a tradesman asks to have his business illustrated it is a self-evident implication that he desires only such a presentation as will suggest to the mind of the observer the most advantageous phases of his industry. Thus we may picture the dismay of the wine merchant who finds, in the subject proposed, a reflection of the public distrust of the purity of his wares. This furnishes the element of surprise; and the fact that we are amused by detecting foibles in our fellow-men make this reference to dishonest practice agreeable. Thus these two requirements of wit laid down by Addison, surprise and delight, are here embodied, and make of the pleasantry an ideal specimen.

A SPECIMEN OF HUMOR.

It will be said by sentimentalists that it is a fatal process to analyze traits of wit or humor—that it is robbing a rose of its perfume, etc., etc.

To this objection we answer simply that there are two widely different ways of dealing with a flower. The one way is to deal with it as a whole and to open all the avenues of the soul to its features of beauty, its color, form and fragrance; and that nameless charm which consists in the manifold associations which the bare name of the flower calls up in the soul—The mind of man as a whole, greets the flower as a whole. That is the æsthetic attitude and the flower remains a synthesis—that organic union of parts, which it was intended to represent in creation.

The other way of looking at it is to inquire into the way it has been composed, the number and variety of its parts, their functions and relations to each other. The mind through one of its parts—(i. e., the understanding), looks at the flower in one of its aspects (i. e., its structure).

This is the process of the botanist and is quite as legitimate as the contemplative attitude of the layman who confines himself to the enjoyment of the flower as an emotional stimulant. The susceptibility of man to this two-fold rela-

tion to such objects as are capable of exciting his sense of the beautiful, obtains no less in the domain of art than in that of nature.

To the mere lover of painting, a canvas is an object of rapturous contemplation and nothing further. He sees the picture as a whole and saturates himself with the æsthetic emotion it calls forth within him. He is not concerned with its parts in isolation. He addresses his soul to the artistic unity which the picture represents.

A professional connoisseur, however, who seeks to make a critical study of its "points," forthwith dissolves this unity, making abstraction of each part in turn to ascertain its value. His attitude is not a perfect parallel to that of the botanist referred to above, for the reason that his criticism, though certainly technical, never loses sight of æsthetic motives and in the last analysis is referable to æsthetic effect; while the botanist's quest is wholly a scientific and practical, that is, an unæsthetic one. The processes are allied in this respect—that in each case of analysis there occurs the dissolution of an object whose highest value inheres in its unity.

Now a witticism or a *bon mot* is a work of verbal art, and may, like the flower and the picture, be viewed from the standpoint of beauty and be merely enjoyed; or it may be

regarded from the standpoint of structure and be resolved into its elements for scientific purposes.

Neither will the analyst of the pleasantry be debarred from enjoying at will the peculiar and æsthetically valuable features of the witticism any more than the botanist's habit of taking the flower apart, impairs his power of responding to its æsthetic appeal when he beholds it in its unity and the fullness of its properties. These functions are not mutually incompatible, but, as they represent different processes, they cannot exercise the same mind at the same time. They can, however, succeed each other in rapid alternation.

Now, with the caution that the dissection of a witticism and its enjoyment be strictly kept apart, we invite the student to attend to the analysis of a piece of familiar humor. We have learned that it constitutes a good exercise in language, because it forces to expression intuitions that before were felt and inwardly conceived without ever attaining to utterance. Besides, if the pupil will conceive his comments in a humorous vein he will thereby improve his faculty for facetia.

The following is such an exercise by a pupil who is pursuing oral language by the method we advocate. It is not the finest of models, but it indicates a measurable approximation to intellectual playfulness:

THE TOMB OF ADAM.

MARK TWAIN.

The tomb of Adam! How touching it was, here in a land of strangers, far away from home and friends! True, he was a blood relation; though a distant one, still a relation! The unerring instinct of nature thrilled its recognition. The fountain of my filial affection was stirred to the profoundest depths, and I gave way to tumultuous emotion. I leaned upon a pillar and burst into tears. I deem it no shame to have wept over the grave of my poor, dead relative. Let him who would sneer at my emotion close this volume. Noble old man! He did not live to see his child: and I—I alas! did not live to see him. Weighed down by sorrow and disappointment, he died before I was born—six thousand brief summers before I was born. But let us try to bear it with fortitude. Let us trust he is better off where he is. Let us take comfort in the thought that his loss is our eternal gain.

The principle motive here is the factitious grief of the author over a subject that has for so many centuries been removed from the painful concern of humanity. We are touched by a calamity in proportion as it is near and recent. However stupendous may be a disaster it affects us but

feebly as soon as time or space interpose to render it remote. Adam having died over sixty centuries ago, we deem it unnecessary to pay any tribute of tears to his memory. Not so the genius. To his vivid imagination the long past is like unto the present. With a strong blow from his potent hand he annihilates the giant distance which stands between him and a tender interest in his relative—the very first he ever had in the world; for it is plain that before the birth of Adam, our author had no relative whatever, but stood “alone, alone on the wide, wide sea” of human uncreatedness. That was one melancholy fact which the mourner overlooked. “He deems it no shame to have wept over the grave of his dead relative.” Neither do we. Heaven forbid! Only, in our miserable prosaic way of doing, we had considered that Adam had been wept over before, and so thoroughly wept over by his loving wife and children that we were exempt from any such melancholy testimony of our interest in him—in short, be it said without irreverence, we had, in our besottedness, fancied that it was not our funeral. But thanks to an example of robust filiality which is the privilege of genius alone, there is another musty theory exploded! “Let him who would sneer at my emotion close this volume.” Close this volume? By no means! Because, if the emotion doesn’t suit us, the fun does, and that’s

what we are after; besides, we have at once scientific and archæological leanings. This mummified emotion—of filial grief—that has lain desiccated for ages, and that we have all the while been looking upon as a mere relic and curiosity lying among the jumbled bric-a-brac of our memory—this emotion, copiously treated with contemporaneous tears, has, like the dried-up corpse of About's "Man with the Broken Ear" resumed the form and consistency of life—it lives, moves, and has its being; nay, weeps and sobs before us: "Noble old man—he did not live to see his child." Here is another remarkable trait and proof of our author's geniality. We had ourselves been inclined to look upon the nobility of our first parent as disfigured by some notable breaches. He had weakly yielded to the tempter, and then when called upon to testify had, in the most cowardly manner, laid the blame on the frailer shoulders of Eve. In short, some of us had been bold enough to declare that Adam had cut but a poor figure in the drama of the Garden of Eden. But this was an error of judgment. Among our author's manifold merits shone conspicuous that of every genuine Missourian—the reverence for the old settler! It was in vain that the cynic philosophy of certain modern thinkers had drawn attention to the unimportance of the Genesis; it was in vain that higher criticism had laid an

irreverent hand on a thousand cherished prepossessions, Mark Twain could see no flies on Adam. "He did not live to see his child." The pathos of this reflection will be greatly enhanced if we but remember how much fun Adam missed in not living to read his child's books. We, too, are not insensible to the allurements of imagination, but by the lamp of fancy we are able to discern old Adam in his precarious garment of dried leaves, warming his fingers before Col. Sellers' modest fire. "He dies six thousand brief summers ago." With what tender euphemism the son tries to lessen to the ear the lapse of ages, no doubt to seem nearer his parent. But to the prosaic soul, six thousand of those seasons, however brief, make up a blooming lot of summers. "But let us try to bear it with fortitude." We have heard that before somewhere. Perhaps it was at the funeral of a more recently departed relative. But, somehow, its familiarity does not incline us to contempt. No, we feel its appropriateness more than ever. When a man has gone all the way to Jerusalem, and has traveled sixty long centuries to fish up and load on an old grief, it certainly behooves him to bear it decently; indeed, it is questionable in my mind whether it would be proper for him to let anybody else help bear it. It seems to me he ought to be jealous of the whole burden. There is an etiquette which belongs to such solemn-

nities which all of us would fain see observed. "Let us hope he is better off where he is." No doubt he gets a better view of the "New Lamentations." "Let us take comfort in the thought that his loss is our eternal gain." This sounds somewhat familiar, too, but haply we are mistaken and the fumes of sympathy dim our understanding. Let us all weep!

Let the pupil observe how, in the foregoing quotation, the conceit of grief, whose mere suggestion was laughable, is ably maintained through a considerable passage by the use of all the cant phrases that are usually unfolded at the bier or the tomb; and how this scheme is varied by the uses of rhetorical figures. "He did not live to see his child, and I—I did not live to see him," is an example of antistrophe which has a droll effect, the fact which it expresses being so from the very nature of things and thus perfectly obvious. In "that his loss is our eternal gain" is the inversion of a popular phrase, a single transposition being sufficient to change the whole sentiment to its opposite while the sound remains nearly the same. The effect of drollery is further greatly enhanced by the fact that the inverted sentiment of the saying happens to run counter to the whole drift of sentiment in the passage, and is the first earnest that the author gives us that he is conscious of his own grimacing. It is

the genuine grin of the humorist breaking through his factitious tears.

In these exercises the pupil whatever his age must consent to be as modest as a child learning to read or write; and to be patient though he stumble in his attempts to sacrifice to the muses of grace and wit and humor. It is already a distinct point gained for some people, that they succeed in assuming, however awkwardly, the humorous attitude; for humor is a great sweetener of life's woes and an almost absolute guarantee against fanaticism. He who can readily laugh at any view entertained by himself or others is not likely to become morbid in his conceptions.

Fanaticism is the petrification of a man in the attitude of seriousness towards some opinion which he cherishes. Humor, on the other hand, is the index of a certain fluidity of temperament which enables a man to divest his mind at will of any garment of thought which reflection may have woven around it, and to hold it up in front of him for inspection and, if need be, for ridicule. It is the badge of the freedom of the mind which rescues it from the danger of becoming subdued to its means—it is, in brief, the evidence of a certain sanity and even generosity of view point to which we are wont to apply the term philosophy.

The present writer who has had experience in this mode

of discipline has been pleased to observe that in those who very properly declared themselves incapable of conceiving a subject humorously, have gradually acquired the faculty much to their improvement not only from the mental but from the moral standpoint as well. As a moral agent the value of humor is but imperfectly appreciated. It is a wonderful antiseptic, absolutely counteracting that morbid and restless tendency so often encountered in our youth as a result of too constant study and of that tension of the mind whose unvarying application to serious pursuits impairs its buoyancy. Add to this effect a more generous moral attitude and the scope of the influence exerted by this discipline in humor readily becomes apparent.

CHAPTER VII.

IMAGINATION.

This is the royal faculty of the mind, the chief principle and agent of all æsthetic conception, and of all artistic production, whether in architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry, fiction, or social discourse. The general ineptitude observed in conversation today is mainly due to the fact that imagination enters so feebly in to it. A prerequisite of good conversation is a lively imagination, aided by a graceful fancy. These, properly brought to bear upon daily converse, confer upon it life, force, and beauty. Without these, human speech becomes wearisomely prosaic or utterly unmeaning. Therefore, exercises in colloquial imagination form a most important part of this course. There are various phases of these exercises. One of them consists in calling the subject's attention to instances of the successful use

of this magical faculty in the novels of our great authors. As Shakespeare's work is, owing to the dramatic form, mainly conceived in dialogue, it will very well serve our purpose. Let us turn to Act I., Scene II. In the last passage: King Henry urges haste to meet the French

"Therefore, let our proportions for these wars,
"Be soon collected and all things thought upon,
"That may with seasonable swiftness add
"More feathers to our wings;—

The king desires that everything should be devised that is likely to expedite preparations. The author's mind which is strong, fiery and vivid, immediately paints to himself a concrete action analogous to the abstract one of enhancing swiftness and in the corruscation of mental electricity the lively trope "add feathers to our wings" is born. Images arise from the deep suffusion of thought with emotion. It is emotion, which, by its strong vibrations, increases the momentum of the thought and invests it with clear outlines and vivid coloring. Thus æsthetic emotion, which ever tends to emphasize an idea, does so by seeking in the material or physical realm concrete symbols for abstract thoughts.

This is illustrated in Act II., Scene IV., when it turns upon the title of the King of England to the throne of France.

Exeter speaks :

That you may know,
" 'Tis no sinister, nor no awkward claim,
" Picked from the *wormholes* of long vanish'd days,
" Nor from the *dust* of old oblivion *rak'd*,
" He sends you this most memorable line,"

And further on, Exeter again :

" Therefore in fierce tempest is he coming,
" In thunder and in earthquake, like a Jove,"

Still further on :

" On the poor souls, for whom this *hungry* war
" *Opens his nasty jaws*,"

Then at random from the same play :

" Impious war arrayed in flames,
" While yet the cool and temperate wind of grace
" O'er blows the filthy and contagious clouds

"Of heady murder, spoil and villany."

—All counfounded, all—

"Reproach and everlasting shame

Sit mocking in our plumes,—

Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Richard III., King Lear and Othello teem with vivid and even exaggerated metaphors. A special study of the Shakespearian metaphor would be of great value in awakening a vivid sense of figurative language.

Another excellent exercise would consist in studying the tropes found in English and American poetry of the first order as well as in essays and in the descriptive passages of works of fiction.

A few random passages from the poets will illustrate the nature of this exercise:

"Whose bright eyes rain influence."

"Most lame and impotent conclusion!"

"Freedom shrieked as Kosciusko fell."

"Honest labor wears a lovely face."

"Knowledge her ample page did ne'er unroll."

"Frame a ladder of our vices."

"Broad ocean leans against the land."

"Scatter plenty o'er a smiling land."

"Many a rose is left to blush unseen."

"To pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow."

"Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars."

"Soul's calm sunshine and heartfelt joy."

"Spires whose silent fingers point to Heaven."

"Rich with the spoils of time."

"The evening beam that smiles the clouds away
And tints tomorrow with prophetic ray."

"Jocund day stands tiptoe on the mountain-tops."

"Though his tongue dropped manna."

"She speaks poniards and every word stabs."

"Stabbed with a white wench's black eye."

"Soothing the raven down of darkness."

"Beauty born of murmuring sound."

"The soul of music slumbers in the shell."

"The fitful fever of life."

"Steeped me in poverty to the very lips."

A few illustrations of striking figures of rhetoric will be taken from our essayists :

LOWELL.

Describing the vividness of an author's descriptions.

"Everything leaps into vision in that sudden glare with a painful distinctness that leaves the retina quivering."

"He sees history, as it were, by flashes of lightning."

"He is in the condition of a man who uses stimulants, and must increase his dose from day to day as the senses become dulled under the spur."

"Meanwhile the world's wheels have got fairly stalled in mire and other matter of every vilest consistency and most disgusting smell."

"He repeats himself with increasing emphasis and heightened shrillness."

"Warning has steadily heated toward denunciation and remonstrance soured toward scolding."

EMERSON.

"Sport is the bloom and glow of perfect health."

"They wear a stately and solemn garb of works and influences."

"The hero is a mind of such balance that no disturbances can shake his will, but, pleasantly, and, as it were, merrily, he advances to his own music, alike in frightful alarms and in the tipsy mirth of universal dissoluteness."

"When I watch that flowing river, which, out of regions I see not, pours for a season its streams into me—I see that I am a pensioner—not a cause, but a surprised spectator of this ethereal water."

"Produce a volume of Plato or Shakespeare, or remind us of their names, and instantly we come into a feeling of longevity. See how the deep divine thought demolishes centuries, and milleniums, and makes itself present through all ages."

CARLYLE.

"A hatred, a hostility, inexorable, inappeasable, which blasts the scoundrel, and all scoundrels ultimately, into black annihilation and disappearance from the scene of things."

"Nature keeps silently a most exact savings bank, and official register correct to the most evanescent item—"

"Injustice pays itself with frightful compound interest."

"That a new hour had struck on the time Horologe, that a new epoch had arisen; slumbrous Europe, rotting amid its blind pedantries, its lazy hypocrisies, conscious and unconscious."

"Only a Goethe has force to keep, even at the sun of good fortune, his phoenix-wings unsinged."

"Wealth bears heavier on talent than poverty; under gold mountains and thrones, who knows how many a spiritual giant may lie crushed down and buried!"

Carlyle quotes from Richter :

"No one in creation is so alone as the denier of God; he mourns with an orphaned heart that has lost its great father, by the corpse of nature, which no world-spirit moves and holds together, The whole world lies before him, like the Egyptian Sphinx of stone half-buried in the sand; and all is the cold iron mask of a formless eternity"

JOHN MORLEY.

"Such contrasts are the very stuff of which Tragedy, the gorgeous muse, with the sceptered pall, loves to weave her most imposing raiment."

"There are many politicians in every epoch whose principles grow slack and flacid at the approach of the golden sun of royalty."

"Makes no difference . . . in the gratitude that is owed to the stern men who rose up to consume her and her court with righteous flame."

Examples like the preceding ones might be multiplied indefinitely, but it is hoped that a sufficient number has been given to enable the student to seek others of his own impulse. It would be contracting a very helpful habit to make a collection of all the vivid figures one meets with in litera-

ture. It would tend to inculcate a strong sense of imagery and later on the remembered images would serve insensibly as models upon which the mind could frame figures on its own account.

Though poetical imagery is earnestly recommended as a discipline, it is well to make haste to say that not much of this is to be used in ordinary colloquy. Average conversation, even of a high order, is more severely moderate in the employment of the fancy than any other mode of verbal expression; and the type of imagination the most appropriate to it is the colloquial. This refers to the combining power of the intellect brought to bear upon the exigencies of social intercourse, which differ vastly from those of oratory, description, poetical reverie and meditation. A good modern play, especially a comedy, gives the best imaginable example of an ideal conversation. The plays of Shakespeare present us with dialogues having, with all their excellencies, two serious disadvantages. The dialect is that of an earlier day and the order of imagination displayed is in most cases too poetical for the severe chastity which reigns in the colloquial English of our day. They are works of genius, it is true, and they are unsurpassed in their disciplinary value, but they are distinctly disqualified to serve as patterns for contemporaneous imitation. Let us then be prepared on

the one hand for a constant study of the Shakespearian dialogue for the purpose of acquiring the spirit of the colloquial excellencies with which it teems, and on the other for an almost equally constant avoidance of its particular verbal forms and even of its often-times exuberant poetical imagery.

Now that we have paid our tribute to whatever of poetical imagination may be needed in our course of training, let us hasten to address ourselves to the types of imagination more immediately suitable for the embellishment of conversation. The first of these is Wit—a quality which presents itself under a number of phases. Under a liberal acceptance of the term, it may be taken to include all forms of intellectual playfulness or ingenuity, while in a narrower sense it is opposed to that form of intellectual playfulness called Humor. It seems best for our present purpose to take it in the narrower sense and to call attention to that particular phase of it which is best suited to conversation and which, indeed, exists only as one of its elements, namely, Repartee. This is the name universally given to a quick, bright reply which, like all traits of wit, occasions a pleasing surprise and thereby gives rise to a mode of æsthetic emotion. Repartee gives the effervescent quality to conversation and streaks the dull gray horizon or ordinary talk with lightning flashes of

wit; it is pre-eminently the principle of colloquial brilliancy. He who is gifted with this particular grace of speech brings a talisman of delight into every circle he enters. Repartee, first of all postulates the indispensibly^{able} quality of relevancy, which, strange as it may seem, is often lost sight of in the conversation class, though less frequently in actual intercourse. The reason for this is that in the class the student, under the pressure of his newly acquired ideals, feels that he must be brilliant and often in thinking of something bright to say, forgets what has been said to him. Thus the answer is not as relevant as it might be and such an answer is by that very lack inapt whatever other merits it may have. As the essence of repartee is a piquant relevancy, in the study of the former the latter is also necessarily acquired. No better examples of either can be found anywhere than in the Shakespearian drama. Take the scene between Rosalind and Orlando in the forest of Arden—"As You Like It," Act XIV., Scene I. That between Benedict and Beatrice—"Much Ado About Nothing," Act I., Scene I. The courtship dialogue between the King and Catherine of France, "Henry V," Act V., Scene II. Scene between Gloucester and King Henry VI, in the tower—"Henry VI., Act V., Scene VI., etc.

Congreve and the other famous dramatists of the Restor-

ation also present us with an abundance of lively dialogue, but the license of the period almost disqualify them for the study of youth. As has already been stated above, modern plays furnish us with the best colloquial models imaginable. "The Rivals," "The School for Scandal," and "London Assurance," all help to train the sense of appreciation for sparkling talk. The dialogue passages in novels are often extremely clever and are worth serious study. Bulwer's novels are particularly rich in colloquial quality. Pelham serves as a text book in conversation. Examples of piquant colloquy and repartee might be adduced without number, but a little passage which happens to be at hand from the German author, Maximilian Bern, will amply serve our purpose in this place.

Julia—"You here, sir!"

V. H.—"Whom else did you expect?"

Julia—"Another equally unexpected visit."

V. H.—"You were about to say unwelcome visit."

Julia—"Perhaps. It would be hard to qualify your behavior in too strong terms. Is there anything you want of me?"

V. H.—"More than I could tell in a life-time!"

Julia—"I could scarcely grant you an interview of such duration. Let me see—you—are about forty years of age."

V. H.—“Dear me, how ungallant! I am only thirty-seven.”

Julia—“Thirty-seven, then, if you think a difference of three years will serve to palliate your behavior. You might live to be eighty.”

V. H.—“How cruel to predict so long a duration of life.”

Julia—“Most inconsiderate people live to be very old. Thirty-seven from eighty leaves—”

V. H.—“Forty-three.”

Julia—“Forty-three years, yes. Now, sir, if you fancy I can grant you an interview of forty-three years—indeed, I can scarcely allow you so many minutes.”

The whole play is continued in this train, and constitutes an excellent model for bright and refined conversation.

The main points to be noted are on the one hand that the answers or replies are always pat and relevant, that is, are closely linked both to the matter and the words of the preceding questions or observations, and, on the other, that the ingenuity with which pleasing surprise is introduced to enhance the effect of the relevancy, does not seem to have been sought for, but to come spontaneously and almost inevitably as a result of the situation or the mood of the speaker's mind. This is what is called the natural evolution of dialogue—the principle and guarantee of all easy conversation. Where it exists, all seem well; where it is absent all is forced, stilted

and wearisome. A good exercise consists in arranging the students in a circle with two in the center who are required to engage in repartee. The two in the center are the only ones who will actually engage in the performance. The others will offer suggestions and criticisms. Let us propose to the two actors in the dialogue to suppose a passage at repartee between a young girl and her male cousin whom she is visiting in the country. He had been teasing her the day before and she is now in a petulant mood with him and, and petulance is a frame of mind in which one is naturally disposed to retort. This indicates one of the secrets of framing dialogues, which is first to put one's subjects in the mood appropriate to the character of the conversation which you desire them to carry on. A love-passage must be undertaken by lovers, one of malignant retort by enemies, one in which the current social amenities prevail should be put in the mouth of friends and so on. But now, for our young repartitants :

"Good morning, Cousin Lill.!"

"Alas, that it were evening!"

"And why, pray?"

"That would mean one day less in your company."

"'Tis hard to entertain me, cousin, I'm so critical."

"Critical, indeed You're as dull as ditch-water."

"Why, now, perhaps you are right. 'Tis so hard to be brilliant where there is no beauty to inspire one."

"'Tis hard, rather, to radiate inspiration where there is not wit enough to catch the ray and reflect it back."

"You have set me down as an idiot, dear cousin, perhaps you'll continue your gracious work and make a hunchback of me as well."

"A hunchback! Then it *would* be hard for you to unbend."

"You have been here a week and have never said or done a kind thing to me in all that time."

"O, the ingratitude of consanguinity! 'Twas only yesterday I defended you for half an hour before a large company."

"On what charge, pray?"

"Poetry, and thanks to my zeal, you were at last unanimously acquitted for want of evidence."

Such little dialogues can be composed as often as the students find time, the oftener the better. The effort must be to pit idea against idea and expression against expression.

A large class of anecdotes are indebted to the principle of repartee for their grace and charm.

A few examples of historical anecdote which come under this head follow :

The poet, Waller, was an egregious turn-coat. He was a conspicuous adherent of the popular party during the great English revolution. He was subsequently won over by the royal party. Later on he supported the Protector and dedicated to him some glowing stanzas of eulogy. Upon the restoration he greeted the

accession of Charles II. with loyal praise. This clever Prince, however, remarking upon the superiority of the strains which he had devoted to Cromwell, the poet wittily replied: "Poets, sir, succeed much better in fiction than in truth."

It was at Coblenz where the throng of *emigres* were gathered during the Revolution and Empire. One was relating how Napoleon, the victorious, had been hailed on all sides with the greatest rejoicings and the most fulsome flattery. The nauseous praise of one eminent divine was quoted who, among other things, said: "God made Napoleon and then rested." The Count de Narbonne, one of the wittiest of the exiled nobles, observed dryly that it was a great pity God had not *rested before*.

The famous Bishop Butler was, before his preferment, filling a modest charge in the provinces, where he lived in the greatest retirement. His friend was seeking to interest Queen Caroline in his elevation. "Bishop Butler!" exclaimed the queen, "Why, I thought he was dead." "Not dead, your majesty," replied the loyal friend, "*but buried*."

The student, especially he who studies alone, should often ponder these examples of repartee and then make repeated efforts to construct either dialogues like the foregoing, or anecdotes in the fashion of those just cited. In the last anecdote quoted it will be seen that the point turns on the double use of the word "buried," its literal and its figurative use. The same motive can be used by the student to frame an analogous anecdote. Let us indicate the process. The

word "crisp" has two meanings, one literal and physical (i. e., easily broken), the other figurative (i. e., bright, lively, piquant). "You had a crisp dialogue with her father when you asked for her hand, didn't you?" "Crisp, I should say so! It broke right in two before I had finished my first sentence."

The word "apprehend" has two meanings—"to understand" and "to arrest." It takes no great strain on the imagination to suppose a situation where both meanings might be employed with facetious effect. Weary Watkins and Rusty Rufus are resting under a tree by the wayside. Rusty Rufus, who affects precision of speech, speaks :

"You think we can reach Castle Rest before tomorrow night, Watkins, but I apprehends." Watkins—"Rusty, don't use that term, 'apprehend.' It sounds—hem—pedantic. That is, I suppose, as I once heard an eminent lecturer say, it's the mysterious spell of association."

One's little colloquial performances are not expected at first to shine with the utmost brilliancy, but they are expected to improve in acuteness of point, in delicacy of touch, and in remoteness of allusion. This, however, is the result of practice alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

COURTESY.

Too much stress can hardly be laid upon the injunction to practice Courtesy. Apart from the fact that it is the most urgent of social duties, it is also the arch-disciplinarian in social culture and the fountain-head of the most delicate wit that man can conceive. There is in the Anglo-Saxon a rooted indisposition to make himself agreeable by paying compliments, and a very especial continuous discipline is requisite to eradicate the tendency in him to remain indifferent to the subtler needs of his fellow-men, among them the craving for approbation, admiration and praise. More success in conversation, in repartee and wit, even, will result from this altered disposition of the subject than from any other exercise yet indicated. The average Anglo-Saxon will find his imagination severely taxed at first to meet the

demands for courtesy made upon him by the exigencies of society in the light of his new ideals. A certain class of readers will no doubt express surprise that politeness will produce wit, for with many politeness means only to say "thank you," "if you please," "will you kindly," and to use such other popular phrases as will occur to anyone who has become familiar with the social formulas of our middle-class circles. This, however, is not the type of courtesy we have in mind. Courtesy, when one has become skilled in it, inspires all manner of gracious compliments which diffuse an aroma of elegance and refinement in a circle that nothing else can confer. Let us illustrate by a celebrated example which is too beautiful for repetition ever to state. Sydney Smith, the eminent English divine who was in his day the greatest wit and finest gentleman in Great Britain, was one day leading a party of guests about in his garden when a young lady suddenly exclaimed: "O, Mr. Smith, these sweet peas have not yet come to perfection!" The gallant clergyman taking the lady by the hand said with a smile: "Then allow me to lead perfection up to the sweet peas." The faculty of such charming speech as this one, which emanated from the bright and gentle heart of Sydney Smith as naturally and easily as the perfume from its flower, would vastly add to the social efficiency of most

other men. Striving to be courteous exercises the imagination by the most laudable and effective means. Therefore the strenuous endeavor to practice courtesy will soon be found to have borne golden fruit. This, however, will not take place until after the pupil has learnt through the practice of months, perhaps of years, to assume with ease and grace the attitude of courtesy or gallantry. Those who feel the responsibility of enjoining politeness upon our youth, seem to fancy that they have done their duty when they have delivered themselves of their bald precepts to say or do this or that thing upon such or such an occasion. What our children should be taught—and that as early as possible—is, that no opportunity should be lost to say agreeable things to people in whose company they happen to find themselves. Without that sentiment so deeply ingrained in their nature that it operates by spontaneous and even unconscious inspiration, they will never achieve the triumph of becoming the instruments of a graceful and refined social life. Without such a keen sense of social amenity they can never enjoy an absolute guarantee against the invasion of stiffness, dullness or insipidity in the social circle.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EVOLUTION OF COLLOQUY.

The Evolution of Colloquy

The almost universal wail that one does not know what to say in the social circle, is due to the fact that the imagination is untrained. This has already been pointed out, but now the student will be given the model for an exercise in conversation which he can pursue for himself and even by himself—in the privacy of his own room. He can in this way institute for himself a little colloquial laboratory. To whatever sex he may belong let him vividly represent to his consciousness that he is in the company of another person. In order to make the scene as vivid as possible, depict to the mind a specific scene and keep its details in view. It will save trouble and clear the mental decks for the main business in hand if the scene can be concretely represented just as is

done on the stage. Let us suppose the actor is a lady and she is setting herself the problem of successfully entertaining a gentleman at tea. She is to have the table and the complete set of tea things before her. The tea must actually be made and offered and poured into the cups. It must be sweetened and cream must be presented, or lemon slices or preserves, after the Russian fashion. It is astonishing what a difference it makes in the capacity of things to inspire suggestion, to have them in actual substance before one. To simply fancy that a cream pitcher is before one will forward one but little in conversation; because the mere representation of the object in the mind through the memory, though entailing constant labor, is feeble; and still more, because it is indefinite. But the real object before the eyes is vivid and definite, and hence suggestive of some thought or fancy. I have seen the prettiest conversation started by some allusion which was suggested by the design on a piece of painted china. Hence the necessity of actualities: first, as labor-saving devices, and, second, as definite sources of inspiration.

This exercise will prove an invaluable gymnastic to prepare the subject for the real exigencies of the colloquial circle, because she will have to play a double role. She will have to be alternately lady and gentleman.

First, let these two persons engage in a talk, from which the element of imagination has been wholly omitted. It will have the advantage of impressing upon those who read it the value of an ingredient whose absence results in such an appalling void. They talk as follows :

He—Lovely weather today, isn't it?

She—Yes, indeed. Shall I give you a cup of tea?

He—O, thank you. I'll take it with pleasure.

She—Do you take cream and sugar or do you take lemon—or preserves?

He—Lemon and sugar, please.

She—Do you like it strong?

He—If you please.

This is enough for our purpose of illustration. The reader will appreciate the absolute blankness of such an interchange of civilities. In spite of the formulas of amenity which succeed each other, this type of intercourse is not civilized; for civilization in social commerce implies the power of giving pleasure. And no pleasure is here possible for the colloquy has remained unilluminated by a single ray of imagination. But the desert may be made to bloom. Let us see how an oasis may be introduced into the waste places. We will first lay down a rule or two for guidance. First, our inspiration takes its rise in the occasion, the scene

or the circumstances at hand ; after that it springs directly out of the thoughts and words of the person with whom we are speaking—our interlocutor, as the French say. Thus after the first sentence has been exchanged, the person whose turn it is to speak has, as we say, the burden of the initiative, that is, he has to think of something. If he is enlightened, he will conceive his duty seriously—which is only another way of saying that he will go to some expense of imagination. If he succeeds in doing so then his interlocutor's duty is to throw back the ball and so the game proceeds, if the players are skillful. If, however, the person who has the initiative does not rise to the level of the situation, but, not having the fear of colloquial censure before his eyes, delivers himself of a platitude, then his interlocutor has a fine opportunity of coming to the rescue, and all may yet end well.

Second, let the converser be constantly on his guard against ante-social forms of reply. His replies should never fail to be so framed as to suggest or stimulate rejoinder. This ensures the continuity of the commerce. But if his sentences are delivered without any regard to this maintenance of connection, the result will be to keep the burden of colloquial responsibility on the shoulders of his vis-a-vis. Should the latter be equally unsocial in his habits or facul-

ties, the result will be a blank, as in the foregoing example. Sentences thus unsocially framed are termed extinguishers; because they do effectually extinguish intercourse, in so far at least as the transaction is a credit to the human intelligence involved.

Let us go back to our pair at their tea and see how they conducted themselves.

When he said: "Lovely weather, isn't it?" he was not brilliant, but it was not absolutely necessary that he should be. The initiator has, to a certain extent, the advantage over his interlocutor. What one starts out with does not matter so much. It is the repartitant upon whom the prosperity of the passage depends. He stands or falls by the imagination he expends or withholds. We shall, therefore, allow the introductory remark to pass. But she must rise to the occasion and say something which is at once animated and relevant. In answer to his remark about the weather, she might have exclaimed: "O, you rash man! I was present when the weather, religion and politics were banished from the colloquial court by royal decree, and now you appear with the first of the exiled trinity at your heels. How dare you!" "O, really now, Miss X., you exaggerate my misdemeanor. This transgression is quite exceptional, I assure you. The day was so very lovely that on the principle

of sweets to the sweet, I felt justified in introducing the fair to the fair."

"Well, I must confess, you have the art of making your peace with people, whatever you do. I accept your explanation as perfectly satisfactory. To prove it I'll give you a cup of tea."

"I could ask for no more convincing proof. When a woman presents a man with a cup of tea it means something quite especial. Madam, I hope your intentions are honorable!"

"I have no ulterior designs whatever, that is, of a sinister character. I only want to bring you refreshment."

"To do that madam, you have but to appear on the scene."

"Upon my word, you make me feel like a lunch-counter. Lemon? and how many lumps of sugar?"

"One, please. But why do you hurt my feelings?"

"You're irrelevant, sir. But one thing mystifies me. I know, from having heard it a thousand times, that the members of my sex are the ornaments of the universe, the flowers in the garden of humanity, the pride, the glory, the blessing and the delight of existence; but I also observe that ever increasing numbers of males sedulously eschew appropriating to their own permanent use the living embodiments of

so many advantages. Is this due to a wave of asceticism that is sweeping over the whole male sex? Let us hope they will not carry it too far."

"Ah, now, you are growing cynical at our expense. That's not exactly hospitable."

"I protest. Cynicism isn't becoming to my sex. I never wear anything that isn't becoming. I do all I can to make myself attractive to the dominant half of the race. I am very anxious to please."

"I needn't tell you that you perfectly succeed—in a charming, piquant way of your own."

"O, yes, I have no doubt, I'm like a horse radish, attractive by dint of pungency."

"You have fathomed the masculine secret, I see. Who told you we hated undeviating concurrence from the gentle sex?"

"You don't fancy for a moment, I hope, that your sex has any monopoly of the degree of taste and intelligence which that feeling implies. Unconditional surrender of opinion beforehand announces either servility or imbecility. And either of these qualities is repellant to a generous mind."

This may continue indefinitely along this line. It will be observed that the character of the dialogue gradually

passes from the mere exchange of light and airy amenities into a distinct interchange of thought and sentiment. It is not proper, however fertile one's mind may be, to begin bombarding people with ideas as soon as one opens conversation with them. The commonplaces of civility justly claim a place here, excepting always the cases in which one addresses near friends or relatives, when they are necessarily omitted. Commonplaces serve as a screen from behind which people who are strangers to each other cautiously peep out to catch traits of mind which may suggest extending the talk in more significant and personal directions.

This illustration, however, was given solely for the purpose of showing how slight a thread the imagination can avail itself of to hang its conceits upon. Nothing so trite, so insignificant that is not suggestive to the well-trained mind. The weather is a topic which has been worn so threadbare by being for untold ages the unfailing resort of those who have nothing to say—those who are too indolent or too impotent to think and too unimaginative to invent—that it is usually tabooed in select circles. Yet even that can be readily availed of as a handle for a lively observation by any experienced converser.

Let us suppose our young people to have held the insipid colloquy first given, minus the opening remark about the

weather. Let the lady begin with, Shall I give you a cup of tea? Even then it need not proceed in the inane manner illustrated above. The gentleman, fastening his attention upon the words of the lady—for he must needs do this to secure relevancy—will detect his opportunity for reply in the word “give,” which naturally suggests the question of the deserts of the recipient. He may then answer if he chooses, “It is very kind of you, but are you sure I deserve it?” In the word “deserve,” he has introduced a new idea into the colloquy, and to this the lady must address herself, especially as his sentence has taken an interrogative turn. If she is dull, she will say, “O, I think you do,” “I hope you do,” or “I’ll give it to you whether you do or not.” But all of these forms have the demerit of not forwarding the talk. On the contrary, their direct effect is to extinguish all colloquial life—they are, in the most emphatic sense of the word, extinguishers. The reader must here learn to give extension to his moral sense by inventing a new commandment: Thou shalt not leave to thy neighbor all the burden of discourse, but shalt diligently acquit thyself of thy share of the task. This should not remain a mere passive conviction of the intellect, but it should pass into the realm of will and govern conduct. One should feel guilty of a moral transgression who is conscious of having failed in colloquial duty.

The lady, if she has a sense of colloquial vivacity—and no woman's education is complete who has not acquired it—will say, perhaps, "O, I'm quite sure you don't deserve it, but I give it to everybody who comes along. * * * "

"Regardless of creed, color or previous condition of servitude?"

"O, yes; I treat henpecked husbands with peculiar suavity. They challenge my pity as well as my contempt."

"I was fondly hoping that I might be favored the least little bit."

"O, it's too early to determine that. Wait till you see how many cups I invite you to take. I simply drown some people in tea. They can't talk and swallow at the same time, you see."

"Ah, I perceive. Your system is simple and ingenious. I have never heard of tea as an instrument of self-defense before. But when you stop a minute to think it seems both natural and effective. . . . "

"And so civilized. Won't you have another cup, Mr. X?"

"Oh, I *am* favored. No, thank you; if you will graciously permit me to take leave of you, I'll saunter out and try to picture to myself the feelings of the submerged tenth."

The student will see from the foregoing examples just

what the colloquial process implies. At every sentence uttered by his interlocutor the converser must make drafts upon each of his faculties in turn, according to the exigencies of the moment. The idea presented in the question or remark addressed to him must stimulate an idea in him, and to this idea he must seek to give graceful and lively expression. The man or woman who would excel in this great art of human intercourse is earnestly enjoined to pay no heed to mistaken zealots who plead the cause of slovenliness under the name of simplicity and of brutality under the name of frankness. The arts by which pleasure is communicated through speech are worthy of the most serious and continued attention. Nothing can be neglected with impunity which is capable of giving relief to an idea when expressed in language. Even as a painter studies the most elusive means in the endeavor to secure subtle effects, so will the sagacious converser make his art the object of equally loving and keen attention. Let him not forget that courtesy is the greatest inspirer of bright speech. Indeed, it may be said that if a speech is polite enough it will be witty enough; for refined and delicate courtesy is itself a species of wit. Allow no opportunity of courtesy to pass without availing yourself of it to the full extent of your ability. This will generate the unselfish habit of mind which is at the bottom

of all true breeding. Acquire the habit of making your imagination play about the slightest topics you handle. Study carefully the style of authors who are experts at this art and seek to reproduce passages that strike you as being particularly piquant. All these things will help to develop your imagination,—and the nimble exercise of imagination is, at bottom, the secret of captivating conversation. Is it necessary to add that for months daily exercise by oneself and weekly exercise in a class will be indispensable to success? I think the reader understands this.

PART II.

IMPROMPTU SPEECH.

PREFACE.

The conviction of the author, arrived at through personal experience and observation, is that most systematic works on public speaking fail because they load the student's mind at once with new theory and new practice. The present humble volume is designed as a series of exercises whose purpose is to free the subject from the thralldom of self-consciousness by simply forcing him to appear before an audience under the very easiest conditions of speech possible. When he no longer becomes frightened at the sound of his own voice, it will be time to proceed to more systematic, and, if need be, more complex methods.

It is but imperfectly appreciated that in teaching a pupil to speak in public we have a two-fold task on our hands. We must first cure him of a mental disease, namely, a morbid self-consciousness that paralyzes all his faculties;

and then we must train these liberated faculties. To begin training the mind before liberating it would constitute a grave fallacy of instruction. The exercises in Definition and synonym discrimination outlined in the first part of this volume, are for this purpose of liberation, to be performed by the pupil on the platform, or at least standing on his feet. This reduces the mental labor to a minimum and thus enables the pupil to give his whole mind to the task of learning to think and talk on his feet. The classic injunction in these cases is "Constant practice under competent criticism."

INTRODUCTION.

I think it may safely be asserted that there is hardly a member of the great inarticulate phalanx of humanity who at some period of his life or on some specific occasion has not bitterly regretted his inability to command orally the resources of his mother tongue.

In this age of universal organization the purposes of human concert are daily bringing it home to men with increasing emphasis on the one hand that it is very convenient to have the gift of ready utterance, and on the other, that very few men seem really to possess it.

Untoward as the situation is, and humiliating as it may be to the sense of human dignity, it is yet true that, unless there is some practical pressure put upon a man to drive him to wrestle with this problem and to resist the handicap of the limitations imposed on his activity by his verbal deficiencies,

he easily resigns himself to eternal silence at the club sessions, locking for the most part within the penetralia of his bosom, alike his sense of discomfiture at his own failure and his envy of the talents of more favored brethren. When, however, a definite purpose outlines a prospect of success, conditioned on the capacity for ready public utterance, an energetic individual is often seen embarking in a hot pursuit for the coveted faculty.

Many, indeed, and touching are the perplexities which attend the average aspirant to the honors of eloquence. The vicissitudes of his quest would often be supremely comical were they not primarily tragical, and while there is a considerable range of incident and resort the classic tradition of this pathetic odyssey may be summed up in a triad of expedients—a course in rhetoric, one in parliamentary forms and a third in elocution and oratory.

After a season of study in rhetoric during which he is often a prey to consuming impatience and doubt, the disgusted student finds that he has learned many technical terms of the science of composition and perhaps written a few themes, but that he has acquired nothing whatever to his purpose. In the study of parliamentary law he has gained some knowledge of the conditions under which the proceedings of deliberative bodies take place, but of the main pro-

ceedings themselves, of speaking and debating, he is as profoundly ignorant as ever.

In the elocution class he at best became proficient in the art of rendering, with suitable gesture and vocal modulation, selections from literature—that is, pieces that have been composed by others, but, as he feels with dismay, he is as far as ever from being able to compose an address of original purport.

At this moment the weary wanderer in search of guidance is prone to give way to despair. He sees that what he needs is the power to translate his own thoughts and sentiments into adequate language with such readiness and fluency that he may be able to deliver himself orally at a moment's notice. This, he begins to see, is the one phase of his education that has been absolutely neglected—the one urgent need for which neither church nor state, nor school, nor home, nor, indeed, any of the various agencies of guardianship that profess responsibility for the career of the individual, have seen fit to make provision. It occurs to him, perhaps now for the first time, by conscious reflection, that command of his mother tongue for the practical purposes of life should form part of every man's primary outfit. He is apt to feel that it is now too late for him to acquire what ought to have been begun in early youth and continued throughout his

school course. Hence the resignation we so often witness to an inarticulateness that has come to seem inevitable.

However, it is precisely at this juncture that we hope to intervene and rescue the disappointed student from despair. Let us, before outlining the formal drill, glance for a few minutes at some of the ordinary phases of discourse, and show how they can be availed of for purposes at once practical and disciplinary; for the exercise in language which a pupil goes through with serves him at once as an instrument of daily use and a valuable discipline for the general strengthening of his faculties.

NARRATION.

It has been truly said that narrative is everywhere the staple of discourse. The truth of the proposition may be more readily conceded than the fact of its universal advantage. However that may be, it is certainly true that we are very legitimately called upon in life to do a great deal of relating. But I doubt whether it is as notorious as it should be that the prevailing standard of narration is in most communities deplorably low. If any one has anything to tell, it is very rare that the way of telling it becomes a matter of consideration. The words and phrases are tossed forth helter skelter without arrangement, and often with but the slightest coherence. The narrator has apparently no ambition beyond the practical end of conveying to his hearer or hearers the mere substance of his account. That the performance offers a field for the legitimate and commendable exercise of syntax, rhetoric, sense of form, taste and imagination, rarely

occurs even to those whose intelligence would seem to warrant a more flattering imputation. At a period when the word, art study, seems to have become the supreme shibboleth of culture, it may not be amiss to declare that the simplest narration cleverly managed, may become distinctly a work of art, and a far more valuable exercise of the sense of art than mere contemplation of pictures; because while the latter is only passive, the former is beautifully and triumphantly active.

It is sad, indeed, to see how in our efforts at narrative and description we neglect, nay, mutilate our opportunities. We find at an early stage of the business that we have omitted precisely the point on which the interest mainly depends. We make digressions to repair omissions inadvertently made at the beginning; we repeat a part of the action in order to make modifications to it, and when we have done we discover that our description falls short of the effect we had fondly anticipated because we have not had the skill to bring in the collateral appendages in their proper order or succession. Now, it is imperative to him who aspires to relate or to describe in company, to do it well; for if he acquit himself blunderingly of his task, he not only fails to give pleasure, but he inflicts positive uneasiness—that uneasiness which is at once torture and tedium—torture because, as a

duly sensitive member of a company, one feels keenly the awkward position of the inexperienced describer or narrator, and tedium because one's attention is being claimed without the compensation of entertainment. Now, these unfortunate contingencies can be avoided only by the conscientious practice of this style founded on good models and subjected to the criticism and guidance of experts. Let the student train himself for a few months in the art of describing all manner of incidents—battles, duels, sieges, encounters with wild beasts, hunting scenes and adventures, horse, boat and foot races, boxing matches, street fights, runaways, robberies, fires, drownings, rescues, falls, explosions, riots. Care should be taken to insure an advance in excellence in each succeeding performance. An error of style in number one should on no account be repeated in number two. The great variety of subjects described will compel the student to look up many new words which, used in their proper connections, will greatly add to his vocabulary and be readily retained by the memory.

DREAMS.

A most interesting and profitable exercise is the description of dreams. It is often a severe test of one's mastery of language. This is due in most cases to the singularity of one's experience during the hours of slumber. The mind seems at such times to take on new faculties and new susceptibilities, one might almost be justified in saying new senses. Who has not at some time in his dreams tasted food whose exquisite savor had no counterpart in his experience of actual life, smelt the odor of flowers that must have grown on the borders of Paradise, beheld scenes of enchantment whose figures were bathed in "a light that never shone on land or sea?" Has not the reader more than once been awakened from a dream in which he had conversed with certain persons on topics that had no place in the categories of this world, and in a dialect spoken by no nation on earth? Dreams and visions will undoubtedly tax one's powers of

description to the utmost, but the exercise is greatly to be recommended to the student who feels himself matured therefor by thorough previous drill in the more easy forms. Practice makes perfect, here as elsewhere, and assiduity will find an early reward not only in the ease and accuracy attained, but even more often times in the æsthetic effect of the description. A young lady under class training was so elated at the brilliant description of a dream which she achieved that she ascribed it to supernatural agency. As a matter of fact, it was only a clear account of a beautiful vision that had made a vivid impression on the mind—the immediate factors of success being the direct results of training; i. e., a copious flow of words and close attention to the record of details as supplied by the memory.

PERSONS AND CHARACTER.

Another mode of description which requires more than ordinary training and acuteness of the intellect is that which relates to the person, both as to bodily features and character. This should be studied with minutest care as to detail and effect. Herein as elsewhere we are fain to resort to literature for our models. There are authors who have a magic touch at pen portrayal. These must be studied in their most intimate processes, dissected, analyzed and pondered until the very secret of success is caught. Especial attention must be given those delineators who have the skill to seize the characteristic feature or gesture or moral habit of an individuality, so that at one stroke it stands clearly revealed to the reader. This gift of deft characterization is one which is almost indispensable to him who aspires to make personal description a feature of his conversation; for the short duration of the process adapts it perfectly to the

exigencies of colloquy where economy of time is imperative and where to inflict tedium is the capital transgression. While in circles that pursue conversation as a fine art, the story teller is discouraged because of the occasional monopoly which the exercise of his talent necessitates, there is no company that does not welcome one who in briefly delivering himself of a telling incident, has the power of bringing forcibly to the mind the image of a well-known type by a felicitous stroke of description, that requires only an instant of time. Hence the value of rapid and effective character sketching and personal description. It goes without saying that in monologue as well as in colloquy, rapidity of process in portraiture is indispensable.

SPECIAL OBJECTS OR PHENOMENA.

Nothing will more readily give a person a correct idea of the extensiveness or scantiness of his stock of words than the attempt to describe a variety of objects with whose nature and composition he is unfamiliar. A case in point is that of a young author who puts his hero and heroine on the deck of an ocean steamer where he made them walk, sit, talk, lean, watch and comment upon the movement and speed of the vessel, etc. He declared once in relating the circumstance that, while he himself had crossed the ocean and was familiar by sight with all those parts and appliances of a steamer that are most exposed to view, he was not able to designate a single one of them by name; so that three or four of the pages of his manuscript where such parts were referred to, were filled with blank spaces which he was subsequently at no small pains of inquiry and investigation to fill out. The same thing happened to him with respect to a

fox hunt whose operations and characteristic incidents he could not name. This illustrates the necessity of constantly varying the objects of description when engaged in the exercise. The student should strain his memory and imagination to increase the list of these objects, peruse newspapers and periodicals and visit picture galleries with the sole view of discovering new objects of description. Let the mind embrace everything that can be thought of—ships, public edifices and constructions, bridges and monuments, pageants, processions, marching armies, assemblies in hall, outdoor gatherings, encampments, political conventions, caucuses, election crowds, decoration day performances, embankments, balloon ascensions, mining shafts, plantation scenes, locomotives, railroad tracks and all that pertains to the train and its operations, the engine rooms, machinery in the various factories, the tools and appliances of the different trades and professions. All the various parts which compose complex objects together with the mechanism which forms the principle of their motion, should be learned by name and systematically applied until all these new terms and ideas have become a permanent part of the mind's stock. The student will have the satisfaction of having increased his verbal resources and converted what was before only vague and misty notions into clear and definite

ideas that are thenceforth ready for instant use to his various purposes. The feeling that precision is the first of virtues and vagueness the besetting vice of expression will be stimulated in him much to the advancement of his æsthetic interests. These thousands of new terms which he will have learned will moreover greatly extend the circle of his freedom in the territory of language. For in verbal intercourse as in every other department of human life, culture is synonymous with freedom and all restraint is due to that sense of thralldom which is born of a conscious lack of means. Every new word acquired is a manacle stripped off—another link broken in the chain of lingual bondage. And when by earnest study and constant practice the student will have drawn within the sphere of his service all forms of expression and risen superior to all the verbal limitations that had beset his path and impeded his movements at the outset of his career; then, and then only, will he be able to walk freely, firmly and gracefully on the plain of discourse.

There yet remains a suggestion before closing this chapter. In order to consummate the mastery of expression the student is enjoined to add to his resources by applying himself to the analytical and critical study of such authors as are most likely to conduce to the general excellence of his style, by cultivating his taste, strengthening his judgment, exer-

cising his reasoning faculty, and furnishing him with abundant subjects for reflection; for, as has been said before, the form of language as well as its substance, ideas, must go hand in hand to insure the interests of culture—ideas and expressions constantly react upon each other to mutual benefit—to get a new idea is to sharpen one's wits to find expression for an old one; to hit upon an expression is to strengthen the mind and enable it the sooner to conceive a new idea. As to his choice of authors for the above mentioned purpose, the student will naturally be guided by the suggestions of his teacher. But, whatever else may be selected for his improvement the student would do well to commit to memory De Quincey's essays on Conversation, Language, Murder as a Fine Art, James Russell Lowell's essays on Shakespeare and Rosseau, those essays of Lamb which strike him most favorably and a few of the shorter pieces of Hawthorne. Swift and Bunyan are to be recommended for their masterly use of Anglo-Saxon idioms and the essays of Addison for ease and elegance.

What Dr. Johnson said with regard to the influence of the last named author on those who are desirous of forming a pure and chaste English style, is known to every school-boy, and may be repeated here to advantage for those who saw in it a sentence merely and not an item of personal ad-

vice. We should say emphatically commit to memory as much of Addison as you can contrive to retain without injury to your mental fabric. The committing of such long extracts will have the effect of developing the sense of rhetorical harmony, coherence, vivacity, symmetry, fitness and all the other forms of artistic sense without which all endeavor to achieve a fair degree of excellence will be in vain.

These exercises may seem to some to have a terribly deliberate and perfunctory character. But we crave the reader's indulgence. Let him remember first, that in any case, it is due the pioneer in a new line, especially in a new department of education, not to forestall his efforts by a distrust of his methods; and, secondly, that, being unaccustomed to seeing language dealt with as an art, it will require some time for him to fully appreciate the fact that, like every other art, it can be acquired only by persistent practice in what must often seem tedious, technical exercises.

DEBATE.

Not long ago in a company where the matter was discussed, a gentleman eminent for his good taste and judgment declared it his belief that High School boys owed whatever merit they gave proof of less to the regular training of the school than to the discussions and debates they practiced in their several school societies. The reason of this was, he argued, because the debates and the discussions constituted actual arenas in which their abilities and powers had opportunity for serious engagement. "The next best training schools," he continued, "are the bar, the stump, and the legislative hall." The sooner the young man gets there the better for his budding genius. It's practice he wants, not theory." So the student of language can not too early be drawn into the practice of the art he is pursuing. The debates on the issues of the day are eminently well calculated to constitute the initial form of dialogue to which he

turns. First for the reason that the *personnel* of the discourse being restricted to two, the process is much simpler than if a greater number were engaged in it; and, secondly, because the subject of debate being usually settled upon beforehand, the participants get time to reflect upon the subject assigned. Besides these debates, turning as a rule on very practical subjects and being of universal interest, tend amazingly to stimulate original speculation and excite sentiments of patriotism in the youthful breast. What in view of this could be more profitable than for the young student of language to begin debating on the tariff, the silver question, woman suffrage, immigration, the various aspects of the labor question, etc.?

The young American has opinions on everything. He has imbibed at the paternal board views, sentiments, and prejudices. To be sure, he starts out in life a fullfledged partisan; but his very partisanship will sharpen his wits to find arguments with which to support his preconceived opinions—and all this will be to the gain of language and speculative power, until by dint of reflection he modifies his views for the better.

DISCUSSION.

Even more fruitful than the debates will be the general discussions of current events which is to succeed them in the order of training exercises. The newspapers and periodicals will as a matter of course supply the subjects for discussion. The effect of this practice, apart from inspiring a salutary interest in what is going forward in the world and stimulating a love of inquiry, will be to equip the student with a vast fund of terms accommodated to the expression of familiar objects and incidents; for even in this most practical and prosaic department, most of us are but indifferently well provided with words. To get some conception of the wide area over which these discussions will take the student there is need only to review the headings of the ordinary newspaper columns. Here we find pestilences and wars, fires and storms, business failures, elopements, divorces, weddings foreign and domestic, births, deaths of distin-

guished men, reviews of their careers, shipwrecks, railroad collisions, establishments of new institutions, publications of new doctrines, accounts of new movements, social, political, religious, economic, records of national and local legislation, measures of administration, election news, disclosures of political corruption and mismanagement of asylums and charitable institutions, burglaries, embezzlements, suicides, murders, assassinations, etc., etc., all inviting description, narrative and comment and affording ample themes for speculation.

BOOK REVIEWS.

The students should then turn to an exercise sufficiently analogous to the preceding to justify the anticipation that the latter has served as an effective preparation for the former, yet sufficiently distinct to warrant the hope of great future gains from it. Each pupil should in turn name some classic novel for the whole class to read. The pupil choosing the book should be required to assume the role of leader in the discussion in which all should be invited and encouraged to share equally. The leadership should never on any account be construed into a monopoly or despotism. On the contrary the leader should be understood to be the host of the company and to have given particular attention to the subject in question, only to consecrate his information to the service of others. He must be expected to challenge those who are backward to join in the talk, to give a pointer to this one to call for the opinion of that one, and in short, to

keep the ball rolling less by his own actual participation than by the activity which he stirs in others. In certain cases, it may be expedient for the teacher to assume the work of direction at first, but it should, as soon as possible, be committed to the pupils in turn.

REFERENCE TO RECENT VERSE, FICTION AND PHILOSOPHY.

New works of verse and philosophy, as well as the best specimens of fiction, should be discussed as soon as they appear. The tendencies of modern thought and sentiment, the various phases of literary movement, and the relations of these several manifestations to the conditions of human life should form the staples of discourse. This exercise will serve not only to give a vigorous impulse to youthful speculation by the serious conversations induced, but it will equip the student with a new set of valuable tools—the vocabulary of literary and philosophic criticism.

ALLUSION.

As allusion constitutes one of the chief charms of literature, so does it infuse into conversation the peculiar graces that are inseparable from literary interest and the literary flavor. It is the only legitimate means by which in the social circle an idea of one man's tastes and acquirements may be conveyed to the mind of another. It is the accepted shibboleth in the ranks of the lettered and the test of one's fellowship in the freemasonry of culture. The taste of the day is, it must be confessed, adverse to copious allusion and it is easy to see how in the hands of one who lacked a due sense of fitness this propensity might degenerate into an offensive pedantry. However, let us hasten to assure the reader that the ranks to which such disparaging reflections are likely to occur are by no means identical with those to whom this work is addressed. Literary allusion, like many another accomplishment, may be advantageously dispensed with only

by those who have mastered it. It is not those to whom it is an unknown realm, that can afford to despise it. Indeed, our classic authors furnish the best examples of its abundant use, and even their master, Shakespeare, has frequent recourse to it as a literary expedient. But it is chiefly as a means of developing the colloquial faculty that we have here to do with it, and as such it is to be warmly recommended. Experience has proved that there is hardly any exercise more effective in stimulating a sluggish memory or arousing a slumbering imagination. The gift of allusion is one of the greatest bulwarks which a healthy mental activity has against the encroachments of decay. It leads out of the memory cells where they were in danger of stagnating or of being utterly dispersed, the events and personages of history and the characters of fiction, introduces them to each other, makes them play roles in the pages of new works, and in the living speech of new men, before ever fresh and eager audiences. It was allusion that threw out the life-preservers in the sea of oblivion to which were found clinging the names and fragments of Sappho, Menander, and a score of the brightest names in literary history. It is the seal which the instinct of the cultivated puts on the solidarity of human thought and the league of human sympathy. Let the pupil peruse the classics of literature and carefully scan the allu-

sions contained therein, explain them to the satisfaction of the teacher and in each case make an earnest endeavor to emulate the practice by an original application. Allusion is divided according to its nature into Poetical, Historical, Literary, Scriptural, Mythological, Philosophical, and Scientific. To the class scientific we may refer also the allusions to the pseudo sciences, such as Alchemy, Astrology, etc. All these appear one after another or gracefully blend in the literature and speech of men. How few books there are in which historical and scriptural allusions are not made? Mythology has for three thousand years furnished poet and novelist with rhetorical devices; and though today recourse to its treasures is no longer as frequent and cordial as it once was, it yet offers suggestions so pertinent that they can never be wholly ignored by those who think, write and speak. The tailor-made style of speech and literature may be ever so firmly established in popular favor, it is not likely that the lover will ever cease to feel the sting of cupid's dart or to see a miniature Venus reflected in the eyes of his mistress—Aurora will still draw aside the curtains of night and the Fates will still control the destinies of men! The visions that inspired our poets will come in the still evening to adorn our reveries or stimulate eloquence in the moments of love's frenzy. The discoveries of science will obtrude themselves

on our memory when we are seeking analogies and comparisons and the latest doctrines of our philosophers are faithfully reflected in our conversation and literature. But of all forms of allusion, that which relates to the characters of classic fiction are today the most frequent and popular. Not only do such devices add both interest and variety to the speech and pages they adorn, but they are great factors in the preservation of the names of authors in popular esteem. Many an author lives today solely in the sphere of literary allusion. How many of those who refer to Dante's *Inferno* have ever read a page of the *Divina Commedia*? Does an enthusiastic reference to Petrarch's Laura imply an intimate acquaintance with that poet's work? Tasso and Ariosto are, indeed, living names, but is it not a superficial vitality due mainly to an unbroken tradition of literary mention? The *Canterbury Tales* and the *Fairie Queen* are vivid titles, it is true, but your bookseller might give you startling information as to the sales of these books. The *Novum Organum* may still be read by savants and students of literature or of human progress, but to the great majority of readers it is little else than an honored name—an epitaph to which many a thoughtful observer of literary fates might fittingly add, "*Hic jacet.*" Not only to the obsolete and the obsolescent has this pious reference to name done effective

homage, but who can measure the services it has rendered to even the most live of our authors? What author's renown has it not extended for beyond the sphere of the natural circulation of his books? How many are not daily moved to seek a book because some interesting reference has been made to it by another or in the speech of a fellow man? Many an author, returning to earth, would be surprised to learn that his works were no longer read and that he owed whatever fractional immortality he possessed to some trick of character or incident that had been caught up by the trumpet of allusion. There is something beautifully humanitarian and grateful in leading our literary acquaintances from out their narrow book-frames and making them a part and parcel of our active, bustling lives, as we do through the medium of familiar oral allusion. It gives a broader interpretation to the maxim, "Tell me whom you go with and I'll tell you who you are;" and it serves as a letter of mental introduction to convey to our new-met fellow men that we have enjoyed the same noble literary acquaintanceship as they. How we warm towards those who, at a feast, whether literal or figurative, like *Oliver Twist* call for more. What a cordial kinship we acknowledge to those whose sense of humor has hung up the portraits of the Micawber family in the foreground of their mental picture-gallery! With

whom do we not enjoy lazily lapsing into poetry with Silas Wegg, or with that same worthy passing airily over the horrors of the decline of the Russian empire out of deference to the ladies? These things all serve to cement the bond of human fellowship and make the world kin. They furnish our conversation with a set of universal standards which we all gratefully accept; and no one can less afford to dispense with these resources than the youthful student who has had neither time nor experience to pass in his knowledge of human nature, from the types of large classes to the species which compose them. To whatever vagaries of reform in literary taste some captious minds may have abandoned themselves, the cautious and conservative pupil will cling to this expedient as one of the main factors of mental readiness and a powerful lever in the mobilization of the mind's furniture.

As may be inferred from the foregoing classification of allusion, the subject is as wide in scope as human knowledge and human life itself, and under its head we shall include, for the sake of discipline, all direct reference by proper or common names to any art, science or class of facts not indispensable to the subject in hand. We shall select but a very few out of the innumerable examples of allusion with which our literature swarms.

SHAKESPEARE.

Mythological.

“My fate cries out
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion’s nerve.”

“Ay, they do my lord, Hercules and his load, too.

“One speech in it I chiefly loved;
“ ’Twas Aeneas’ tale to Dido.
“And thereabout of it, especially where
“He speaks of Priam’s slaughter,

“The rugged Pyrrhus like the Hyrcanian beast.”

“Then senseless Ilium seeming to feel this blow.”

DRILL IN PUBLIC SPEAKING.

We will now take up the formal drill and show the laws of speech in active operation in the more ordinary occasions of monologue. As it is acknowledged a sound principle of instruction to begin dealing with the simplest forms and gradually handling those that are more complex, we shall first confront the pupil with the comparatively slight task of INTRODUCTION.

Just here we desire to emphasize the word comparatively, for it is certain that even the briefest introduction requires no less than the longest address, the marshalling of almost all the qualities of mind which constitute eloquence. Indeed, it may be said that the art of making an introduction is an even more infallible test of character and taste than a longer address. A man may make a fine speech and yet go completely under in the effort to achieve an introduction. This is easily accounted for by the fact that the main speaker

on any occasion has no legitimate rival in his claims upon the attention of the audience, and is therefore hampered in the disposition of his material, and the determination of his time limits only by the general conditions of such an occasion. He who introduces another has additional considerations to observe, the foremost one of which is the presumption that on the one hand the audience is eager to make the acquaintance of the main speaker; and on the other, that the speaker himself is equally desirous of embarking upon his role. The obvious policy of the introducer is, therefore, self-effacement. Any infraction of this canon can only result in one of those tragi-comedies of which Max O'Rell relates a striking instance.

He was once introduced to an audience by a gentleman who spoke an hour and a quarter upon the merits of the prospective speaker. The latter, upon receiving his cue, stepped before the footlights merely to congratulate his hearers upon having enjoyed a peculiar treat in the eloquence of the gentleman who had just spoken; and to express the hope that he himself might some day likewise have the pleasure of addressing them. The rebuke was no doubt all the more keenly felt because the coarseness of the perceptions of the transgressor was thrown into such vivid light by the delicate expression of his victim's resent-

ment. This example will serve perhaps better than any precept to show what was meant by the mode of introduction constituting a test of character and taste. It must be plain that the social outrage in the instance quoted above was due mainly and primarily to the inordinate personal vanity of the transgressor. He evidently clutched with more eagerness than wisdom at the opportunity of giving the assembly before him a copious dose of his personality, regardless of the feelings either of the mass of his hearers or of the titular orator of the evening. There was not only vanity involved in the source of this blunder, but ignorance as well. This incident illustrates the advantage which a man of the world has over a provincial, namely, that, while he may be quite as tainted with vanity, he has nevertheless the saving grace of good-breeding which impels him to suppress the manifestations of this vice in deference to the social claims of others.

From the foregoing observations the discerning reader has already doubtless inferred that one of the most important laws of the introduction speech is that which governs the time-limits. It may be said that on ordinary occasions these might range from three to ten minutes. A legitimate extension of this maximum to fifteen minutes would certainly imply a combination of circumstances of very infre-

quent occurrence. A case therefore that would justify an even longer address in so simple a matter is absolutely inconceivable to the present writer. One who is desirous of making a success of public appearance would do well to make it a point of honor to condense his introductory remarks so as to deliver them within the space of three minutes. It will require some thought at first, some arrangement and some concentration; but the habit of economy of means which accrues to him from the continued practice is one which will richly reward his efforts. It makes wonderfully for sincerity of purpose, for considerateness, for force and clearness.

The next point to consider is the substance of the address. In introducing a person who is well-known, it is a good expedient to set down on paper or on the tablets of one's mind all the claims of the prospective speaker to the attention or gratitude of the public, to arrange them on an ascending scale of importance and deliver them in one concentrated, forcible and harmonious period. If there are too many of these claims, some of the lesser ones may be safely omitted, for, let it be promptly established, it is the essence of the etiquette of such an occasion that the supreme celebrity of the subject should be assumed. Now the pregnant

brevity of the introduction is the expression of this assumption.

In the case of a person of eminent worth but of a fame which is restricted within the limits of a particular class, as, let us say, a geologist or an astronomer, the Introducer may consider himself as a herald or even an extender of the fame of his subject and he may very properly trench by a few minutes on the established time limits.

Another aspect of the performance which is to be jealously kept in view is its opportunity for the exercise of social amenities in a more positive form. A lively and ever vigilant sense of courtesy as often renders great service in embellishing a meager reputation as it does in bringing into relief a more brilliant one. A performance is not unfrequently stripped of all its attractive qualities by a lax exercise of that delicate social benevolence which we call courtesy. In Anglo-Saxon civilization the claims of courtesy are, as a rule, rather too summarily disposed of; and it would become the members of the new generation to take them a little more seriously into their account in estimating the means and forces of civilized life.

To sum up our remarks, let us lay down the proposition that in an Introductory address the three cardinal points to be observed are Pertinence, Concision, and Courtesy. Which

is to say that the subject-matter must be strictly applicable to, and characteristic of, the individual of whom it is predicated; and this subject-matter must be expressed both briefly and politely.

Let us assume that we are introducing a distinguished magistrate the diffusion of whose fame leaves nothing to be desired:

“Ladies and gentlemen, the man who rendered valiant service in the hour of his country’s direst peril and afterwards stood in the forefront of American politics, fighting the battles of American Protection, needs no introduction to an American audience—for whom, indeed, his figure stands boldly outlined against the horizon of contemporaneous history. It is therefore as a mere matter of form that I introduce to you to-night Governor W. H. McKinley, who will address you on the issues of the campaign.”

I have chosen this subject because I once had the opportunity of seeing it grossly abused on the occasion of a campaign address. The few words given above adduce all that is necessary in deference to the law of the occasion and they are pronounced in less time than one minute. The Introduction must take place as a social ceremony, the subject’s wide fame must be assumed; hence only the briefest reference to it as a compliment to the distinguished guest is admissible.

This, moreover, must be invested with all the forms of politeness possible on this side of excess.

Let us take another example :

“Ladies and gentlemen : Our present distinguished guest has so many and varied titles to your admiration and gratitude that, in view of my time-limits, I cannot but esteem it a piece of good fortune that your profound acquaintance with his career makes their enumeration on my part wholly unnecessary. Whether I mention the strenuous pioneer of the western plains, the able author of many valuable works, the fearless commissioner who boldly carried the standard of civil service reform into purlieus where the foiled serpents of political corruption hissed their rage and hate; or the hero of Santiago whose impatient but noble ardor carried everything before him; I but indicate a group of facts which constantly occupy the foreground of your consciousness. You will therefore permit me without further delay to introduce to you the Hon. Theodore Roosevelt, who will entertain you with his characteristic force and frankness on the issues of the campaign.”

This, though a little longer than the preceding, also takes less than a minute for delivery. The same motives underlie

them both. It is necessary at once to assume both as a matter of fact and as a measure of amenity that the facts are all thoroughly and widely known; and yet as a matter of ceremony to make a compendious reference to them. This is always the problem of the Introductory formula—to conciliate the interests of form with the exigencies of courtesy within the narrowest possible compass.

There is no salvation outside of these conditions. As for the rest, it is not desired to propose any absolute models to the student. Each one has his own style, which is not to be superseded by a foreign one or in any way perverted. Each must respect the style native to him, subjecting it to no violence or change any further than is necessary to correct excess in any direction. Not all are susceptible of achieving the utmost degree of concision. Some are by their constitution addicted to diffuseness. The effort of the teacher, or, in default of that, of the student himself, must be strenuously directed to curing the excess of that quality without disorganizing the native style. It has been well said that a man's virtues and vices spring from the same stock and that to destroy the latter utterly would be to deprive the former of their vitality. There is accordingly a point beyond which correction must not be carried; and if a teacher be so far successful as to inculcate in a pupil, who was

wont to take ten or twelve minutes for an exercise, concision enough to reduce the time to six or eight minutes, he must be fain to accept these comparatively unsatisfactory limits for a space at least and leave further development in this direction to the slower but certain operation of time. The fact that other pupils may have made twice the progress along this line should not discourage him.

Nothing is more remarkable than the diversity observed among pupils with reference to the mode in which their imaginations play with a given subject. Some of them may scarcely be said to represent in their utterances the play of the imagination at all, so dry and so colorless is all they say. Others take pleasure in the splendor of imagery and revel in figures of rhetoric. A favored few distinguish themselves by a chaste and graceful simplicity of style, which wins by a purity without precision and a harmonious flow without monotony; while to a certain class of minds intellectual sportiveness is the very breath of life; so that all they treat moves in a mellow, genial atmosphere of humor or serves as a source for the fireworks of wit. These are but a few of the primary colors of style which unite in infinite combinations and blend with each other, producing infinite shades and tones, all organic to the individual and as unmodifiable in their essence as the color of the subject's eye

or the shape of his nose. The function of the teacher or guide is solely to lop off excrescences, to obliterate defects that are obviously remediable and to reclaim the pupil from pernicious habits into which he may have fallen. Beyond this, interference is invariably fatal; for personality in all essential traits is sacred; it is only the accidents of personality that are legitimately amenable to modification.

Let us consider a moment the few primary qualities of style we have enumerated and ascertain, if may be, what the teacher's attitude should be towards them. Where, as in the first mentioned, the style is dry and absolutely lacking in all the qualities which are said to relieve composition, whether oral or written, it is plainly the teacher's duty to attempt to instil into the pupil a taste for aesthetic quality. If the instruction is to succeed, the order of aesthetic development as indicated by nature must be observed. Now the sense of beauty is first awakened in the human soul by perception. Perception repeated gives rise to observation. Observation is succeeded by rapturous contemplation,—which we call appreciation. It is only after appreciation has fermented for a time in the soul that it becomes a motor force—a force strong enough to impel to reproductive activity. The great problem in aesthetic training is to make

the mind take the step which separates the passive state of appreciation from the active state of creation. However, it is not impossible, in many cases, to bring the pupil to take this step : but it takes time, effort and patience. The unfortunate pupil who is the prisoner of a dry and unattractive style can only break his bonds by the unremitting study and analysis of those specimens of composition which embody in a supreme degree precisely the qualities in which he is most lacking. He must read them over and over again. He must take one imaginative passage after another, weigh it, dissect it, explore it and leave no means untried by which he may discover the secret of its beauty. When he has done so, he must forthwith seek to imitate it, but only, of course, as a means of discipline, as an expedient for saturating his soul with the effect, the essence and the movement of passages which have achieved the triumph of beauty. This is not fantastic. It has been tried and tried successfully. Indeed, the pages of biography teem with the records of such experiments. It may even be said that enthusiastic study and imitation represent the first stage of the poet's career. In the very process of imitation the poet's mind evinces its native tendency by an unerring instinct, on the one hand of selection ; and on the other of rejection.

The pupil who presents the contrasted vice of floridity must be confronted with specimens of oratory which shine in virtue of their classic purity and the chaste reserve of their style. A bright pupil soon becomes very apt at detecting extravagances in his style and his readiness to eliminate passages which violate good taste rapidly increases. The continuous spectacle of what is correct and elegant gradually bears fruit in stimulating emulation. This is the very logic of this system of the constant contemplation and imitation of the best models. One becomes steeped in the element desiderated. It is conceded on all hands that environment has much to do with one's inspiration; but it seems to me that the fact has not been sufficiently appreciated that a factitious environment that is skilfully adapted to a specific purpose is fully as efficient as an adventitious one.

PRESENTATION.

It has been my lot to witness social ceremonies of which the presentation of some object to an esteemed person was the central act. In few cases, indeed, has it seemed to me that adequate wisdom had presided at the performance. For the most part there was a timid and uncertain, not to say awkward tender of the object presented, accompanied by an almost inaudible comment or two, making of the matter a scene in which the audience bore hardly more than a visual part. When it did happen that the presentator possessed the verbal faculty at all, he usually spoke too long and too diffusely. Once or twice in my life I have been regaled with the spectacle of a presentation ceremony which left nothing to be desired. On such occasions the speaker supplied in a becoming manner, as to speech, look, gesture and vocal accents, just what was requisite and nothing, absolutely nothing, more. It was like a small but compactly constructed

edifice from which not a piece, not a stone, could be spared. Every part of the diminutive address fell into its place—which would have remained a void if it had not been supplied. It requires just such an occasion to give the auditor an experience which could not otherwise come so vividly within his range. A narration of it would be but a pale copy and would fail of half its effect—which is to bring home to one how much delight may be derived from the slightest oral performance which has been either unconsciously or deliberately availed of with success as material for the sense of form to exert itself upon. It is as if one saw a graceful pastel or water color. A few such perfect occasions would suffice to impress a discerning mind with the fact that form should be observed in all phases of utterance, that it is in fact the test of culture to see opportunity for realizing beauty in an ever-widening circle of activities.

Now, to turn to the practical part of the subject. What must be the first consideration for one preparing a presentation speech? The answer to this query involves no mystery whatever, yet nothing seems to be so rare as to look the matter squarely in the face with whatever of common sense one happens to possess. In fact, the most sensible people often make haste on such occasions as these to abdicate their reason, as if they suspected that it stood in their way.

“What shall I say?” exclaims the bewildered seeker after inspiration. The answer must be that in this, as in every case in which speech is contemplated, counsel must first be taken of the actualities. What are the circumstances? To whom is this cane presented and why? In token of admiration for gifts of mind? In gratitude for services or benevolence? Whatever the answers may be, they represent the data you have to handle. This process is so far the work of the reason which, used thus in treating the homely affairs of life, we call common sense. Now the moment has come to invoke the aid of a new faculty, the imagination. Do not suppose that, because I separate it from reason, it is in any way to be considered as opposed to that august faculty or contrasted with it. On the contrary, imagination is made of combining the elements of consciousness. This is the function of reason as well, only the combination over which reason presides alone serves exclusively the interests of the understanding; while the product of imaginative arrangement ministers to the sense of beauty. Therefore, imagination is sense but not common sense. You may call it if you like *uncommon* sense. Each has a definite role to play where speech is to be employed to meet both a practical and an aesthetic demand. Common sense is your purveyor. It puts your material in your hand. Imagination is, so to speak,

your steward and decorator. It shows you how to dispose them in wise and beautiful order.

Let us suppose the case of a man representing a committee in the bestowal of a cane to a gentleman who had aroused their enthusiastic gratitude by establishing a flower mission in the slums.

The process for the pupil is clearly to gather together as data, the actualities of the case and to regard them for better or worse as the source of his inspiration. Outside of that there is no salvation. This can hardly be repeated too often; for the bane of a language teacher's life is the tendency of pupils, when the moment comes to exercise the imagination, to look upward agape at the sky as if they expected flakes of inspiration to drop down upon them from some invisible and unattainable, but magical empyrean. Look neither upward nor downward, but hold your level glance upon the material in hand. There or nowhere is *your ideal!*

What, then, in the present instance are your actualities? They are briefly and simply: first, a benevolent man whose bounty has provided flowers for the daily delectation of the wretched poor; secondly, the appreciation of his fellows, which the act called forth; thirdly, the result of the preceding in the gift of the cane. These you are to take in turn and set them before you. As you place each item before you

you must consider it a centre from which lines radiate in every direction to other objects in its compact environment of things and thoughts, of conceptions and images. These lines form organic connections with the datum you already have in hand, and with other things you at first thought not of. Thus new combinations are formed which oftentimes take very graceful shapes and which embellish while they enforce the thought they express.

Let us put in the centre our first datum, the benefactor himself. What does he suggest? Why clearly benefaction. Just so. Now then does it require any undue exertion of the representative faculty to proceed from benefactor in particular, i. e., our present subject whom we see, to the general type of benefactors? Certainly not, if our mind is in working order at all. Then we have now *one* hook on which to hang a passage. Let us keep track of it. What kind of a benefactor is ours? Did he give his beneficiaries bread, or meat, or oatmeal? No; he gave them flowers. He had evidently heard that men lived not by bread alone, and, rash man! he had had the hardihood to extend the application of the proposition beyond highnesses, royal and democratic, gigsmen, etc., to the wretched and filthy denizens of the slums. Truly, a remarkable man! But that is not all. Flowers themselves radiate lines in all directions and salute

an infinity of objects in their environment. Flowers are undisputed sovereigns of a vast territory of human affairs and have extensive international relations. Mythology, religion, history and poetry cheerfully acknowledge their sway. The proteges of the trees, the confidantes of the zephyrs, the messengers and interpreters of love, the crowns of poets,—they are the very crystallized breath of the muse of poetry herself. We must not neglect the flowers—they are number *two*. Then we have the fact of the appreciation of others—this we will express either directly in formulas of thanksgiving or indirectly in the mode of handling the other data so as to reflect the prevailing sentiment toward the subject. That is number *three*. Then there is the cane. The cane is in itself a thought-stimulating instrument. The cane is number *four*. However, knowing how the slightest suggestion is capable of expanding under the genial ray of fancy, I have strong reason to suspect that we shall not fully exploit our fourth item. Now let us see how we can weave all this into a bit of verbal tissue. Let us not lose sight of the amenities which must preside as the very muses of the occasion :

Mr. X.:—"As spokesman of the Committee of Thirty, in relation to whom you have borne so noble a part as patron and active helper, it becomes my pleasant duty to bring you the heartfelt thanks of these your friends and admirers.

Strongly persuaded as we are of your native distaste for the role of hero in any ceremony, we yet felt that it was due you to acknowledge our deep sensibility to the peculiar beauty and value of your benefaction in this benighted section of our city.

Until you came to us with the twin gift of your wisdom and your benevolence, the highest reach of philanthropy in dealing with these disinherited children of fortune was to *feed*; you divined that we ought to *delight* them.

While hitherto relief parties had bethought themselves that the poor man had a *stomach*; you remembered that he had a *soul*.

Where they brought bread to prolong a life that might seem hardly worth living, you supplied an element that enhanced the value of that life itself.

The tender paternity you have assumed towards our wretched proteges shines nowhere with brighter lustre than in its relation to the little ones; and nowhere has the work reaped a richer harvest of salvation.

Infant eyes starving for a sight of natural loveliness, responded with touching eagerness to this simple aesthetic stimulus. The blossom in the child's hand awoke blossoms of emotion which still slumbered in the recesses of the infant consciousness; and the little frame was swept by a thrill it

had never known before. Flower called unto flower, and the soul of a child was born.

But we have not met here to weary you with the enumeration of all the happy effects of your gracious enterprise. If they have been referred to at all, it was only to justify the tender of this cane which we pray you accept as a slight, a very slight token of our unbounded love and esteem. May it be a symbol of that moral support which is the most precious legacy of the past to him who is conscious of having actively and wisely 'loved his fellow-men.'

Take it from us who love you and who pray with one voice that you may use it many years."

It is, of course, an invidious task to present a specimen of one's inspiration to a class, as it always seems to carry with it an assumption of peculiar excellence. This is not here the case. Examples are given here merely of the modes of the mind's operation with data which are determined for purposes of practice. Each man's imagination has, in details at least, its own mode of handling its material which is indigenous to his own mind and consequently sacred. He must not alter it or pervert it in any way. He is, however, by every means, to seek improvement of his own style along the lines traced by nature and which soon become apparent to him, either through affinity or contrast, as he studies the

peculiarities of style of other men. He may even imitate renowned stylists in order to acquire symmetry, smoothness and elasticity in his own style which, in its essence, must continue the same.

The one thing for which contention is made here, is that the imagination must be called into requisition, whether it take the form of grace, courtesy, fancy, wit or humor, or whether it blend them all. The great cry on the part of those who are inexpert in dealing with social situations which give scope to verbal skill is that they do not know what to do with their data even when that is determined. When we say verbal skill, it is well understood that the term has reference to the ultimate step of the process which is verbal. In origin and in essence, however, it is a complicated metaphysical operation, involving all the functions of the mind—perception, memory, reason, imagination and fancy. In fact, it is at its best a complete and brilliant psychical drama in which all the faculties play their appointed roles and in which occasion serves as stage-manager. Now some people have by natural gift the power of rapidly combining their data into new and effective groups, a sort of mental prestidigitation which enables them to create ever new miracles out of old elements. Others have feeble power

of representation and of imagination. They cannot carry in their heads lines of reasoning or light easily upon analogies between the different planes of phenomena. Their powers of association are not lively, one thing not readily suggesting another. The elements are apt to stagnate in their consciousness and refuse to move even when solicited to do so by opportunity. The one remedy is frequent exercise in this oral and verbal composition. The mind must be daily confronted with one of these thought and language problems, daily given new subjects, each representing a number of elements to be arranged and re-arranged. In this way the mind will acquire strength and dexterity, the power to deal more suggestively with its material and win ever new aspects from its shifting groups.

According to universal testimony, one of the trying situations of club life is the necessity for responding to the honors of nomination or of election. While a very few command a gift of graceful readiness, a woeful majority confess themselves worsted by the occasion. As for their expression of the predicament, there is a chorus of but one consecrated phrase, "I can't think of anything to say." Now let us see what can be done for a person in this plight, a person so bereft of ideas that he has nothing to say on an occasion

which is of itself so very stimulating to thought and emotion. First let us consult the paramount oracle in all situations, i. e., common sense. This points out that relevancy must first be secured: the speech must be adapted to the occasion, that is, it must describe the thoughts and sentiments of the speaker. Now this occasion is an event bringing *honor* and *distinction* to the one chosen and the emotions accompanying such an event must be those of *pride*, *joy*, *elation*, *delight*, and the like. The emotion of *surprise* may happen to be superadded. In most minds there naturally succeeds an emotion of *gratitude* to those who have become the source of such pleasant experiences. Is it not likely that to a modest soul, the sensations of elation must soon give way to a sense of the responsibility incurred by the acceptance of a new post of duty? Sometimes the mind undergoes a complete revulsion under the new and often overwhelming sense of apprehension which comes over the officer-elect.

Especially is this true when he remembers that the outgoing president was particularly distinguished for efficiency. He begins to *dread* the *idea* of a future *comparison* and a *sense of distrust* begins to creep over him. However, he reflects that to yield to the *temptation to decline* the honors of office would seem a *poor requital* of the generous *confidence* of his friends. It would give him the appearance of *trying*

to shirk. Therefore he accepts, but as courtesy demands that he should graciously recognize the value of the *co-operation* of the bulk of the members he assures them that if he consents to undertake the cares inseparable from that honorable post, it is only because he *builds his hopes of success* on their *indulgence, encouragement* and *help*. This may be accompanied by *praise* of his *predecessor*. Now, it would seem that these injunctions contain principles of expression that are perfectly obvious; yet one has but to consult one's experience and one remembers but few occasions in which one or more of these were not flagrantly violated or neglected.

I recall in particular the occasion on which a superior woman was succeeded in the presidency of a club by an ambitious and pretentious but distinctly inferior person who complacently made her address of acceptance without the slightest reference to her distinguished predecessor. The impression of ill-breeding and stupidity which such an egregious omission left was disastrous to the propriety of the scene and served as an effectual revelation of character.

All these points together constitute a schedule of motives which are organic to the average case. The schedule may be employed in whole or in part, just as the features of the occasion dictate. Once more our motives are in their order:

- I. Surprise.
- II. Sense of honor or distinction conferred.
- III. Gratitude.
- IV. Pleasure, joy, delight, etc.
- V. Alloyed by apprehension.
- VI. Responsibility great.
- VII. Ability of predecessor.
- VIII. Distrust own abilities
- IX. Inspired by fear—have temptation to decline.
- X. Think, however, this an unworthy step.
- XI. Would not appear to shirk duty.
- XII. Trust in co-operation, etc.

One has but to consider these motives, to see that there is always matter at hand on such an occasion, the only difficulty being with the subject who has not been accustomed to treat matters verbally.

Let each select the motives which appear to him to arise naturally out of the situation and arrange them in order in simple and smooth language, and even though he miss positive eloquence he cannot fail to come within the lines of propriety. And at first the student of social address must be content to achieve modest success. He will gradually learn to subdue that paralyzing self-consciousness which is the

beginner's most formidable incubus. As he acquires control over his person, he gradually comes into command of his intellectual resources as well. His insight into the latent possibilities of a subject increases; then confidence in his own powers is added unto him, and the miracle is complete. But precisely because the first step is so desperately hard to take, the anxious prospective speaker needs a little definite guidance even though this should appear rather stiff and stilted. It must be kept well in mind that this is but a bare skeleton or framework, like that which forms the foundation of every structure. It is bald and uncouth in itself but it is indispensable to the edifice contemplated.

Let us look at the embodiment of a few of these motives: The following is the substance of an address once delivered in my presence by a gentleman who made no pretensions to oratory but who was a genial, intelligent man with an infallible sense of the *apropos*.

"Ladies and Gentlemen:—Allow me to express my amazement at finding myself so suddenly elevated to the honors of office. I am not accustomed to underrate my personal advantages, but on this occasion I confess that I am at a loss to determine to what particular trait I am indebted for this distinction. I trust that on one score at least history

will not repeat itself for me. That is to say, I hope that tomorrow no guileless member of the nominating committee will throw a damper on my triumph by calmly volunteering the intelligence that they set me up because nobody else would consent to run. If you only agree to avert that, I will promise to see to it that you will never regret your choice.

“My amazement I have confessed, my joy you see in my countenance, and my gratitude you may count upon. From this day forward my career will be one of the wildest victory. I will feverishly scan the annals of this organization, fasten my aspiring glance upon the most striking exploit that emblazons its pages, and I solemnly swear to break the record. Trusting you will take my zeal in good part and crown it with your encouragement, I may say that I already feel myself on the road to success.”

This is neither brilliant nor eloquent, but somehow it exactly fitted the occasion, the audience and the character and purpose of the organization.

There is often a mystic and incalculable element in such occasions which seals its character for propriety and effectiveness. The key missed, everything is lost. The speaker must in some way get at the essence of the general attitude, key his thoughts up to it and keep *en rapport* with his

audience throughout. His inspiration will then not fail of the right quality. In this instance the speaker and his audience thought and felt exactly alike and that became very proper here which would have been utterly out of taste elsewhere.

There are, to be sure, occasions where the language is serious *de rigueur*, in grand toilet, as it were, and any admixture of levity would represent a false note. But as a rule, it may be said that an American is ever ready for a bit of humor. That is the note he likes to hear, the note that will atone for much lack of form.

Another point is the quality of the humor. This must be adapted to the taste of the audience, which is to say, its degree of aesthetic refinement. In one stage of culture a mode of playfulness is agreeable, which in another would give positive offense. In the lower strata of society the simplest and coarsest horse-play suffices to produce the effect contemplated by nearly all expedients of mirth, namely, to put the audience in good humor and deepen and fortify its *rapport* or sympathy with the speaker. As one ascends the social ladder the tissue of pleasantry is woven with finer and closer threads; and in no phase of his initiative does an orator more certainly imperil his prosperity by a comparatively slight lapse, than in jocularity. It is the *faux pas*

which precipitates a man headlong into the pit. The young student of popular favor will, therefore, do well to remember that an audience will often cheerfully overlook inappositeness of epithet, looseness of statement, lameness of logic and many other errors of discourse, but it will deeply resent the social classification implied in a clownish joke.

REMARKS.

A few remarks on the qualities of public address in general may not be amiss before concluding this part of our manual.

The first requisite of any public address which aims at something more than merely meeting a slender social exigency, is method. By this is meant "a general plan for setting forth any branch of knowledge whatever; a mode of arranging thoughts for investigation or exposition."

The most salient feature of Method is classification. By this is understood the arrangement, for successive treatment, of the parts of a subject according to a hierarchy of rank or to a scale of importance determined by degree of generality. This is done for the purpose of employing the time and effort of the investigator to the best advantage.

In treating a subject, however, the very first thing to consider is the definition. It should by no means be taken

for granted that this is sufficiently understood, as, owing to an erroneous conception of the nature of the subject, the whole value of an address may be lost upon some one or more of the audience. A distinguished author asserts that a due definition of terms would have effectually forestalled most of the profitless discussions that are now being waged in art, science and letters.

The unwary fancy that words are fixed symbols having in quality and degree one and the same value for all; whereas one needs only to reflect that the word, love, belongs as much to the vocabulary of a prize-fighter as it does to that of Emerson and of Shelley, in order to appreciate the fact that a chasm may yawn between the maximum and the minimum value of an abstract term. Hence the indispensability of introducing one's subject by an accurate definition.

This exigency satisfied, we are ready for the classification or distribution of the parts of which the subject matter is composed. As one naturally sees first the trunk and the main branches of a tree, so the main principles of classification strike one before the lesser ones.

Thus, if one were ambitious enough, like another synthetic philosopher, to take the whole universe (in its broadest sense of the all) as material for treatment, he would be

likely immediately to see that this stupendous entity fell primarily into two divisions, the creator and the created. The created into organic and inorganic constituents; the organic into animal and vegetable life; the animal into all the subdivisions of Zoology, Protozoans, Radiates, Mollusks, Articulates, Vertebrates; the Vertebrates comprise Mammal, Birds, Reptiles, Fishes; the Mammals include Man and Quadrupeds; Man, under the rubrics, structure, habits and habitations which his description would entail, etc., gradually unfolds to our view the whole circle of learned categories,—everything that could be thought of or named by man; from astronomy to cookery, from theology to lace mending. Thus we see that the unity of the world is no mere phrase but a vital, undeniable fact. The phenomena we are most familiar with and even those which seem most trivial to us, are all capable of being referred to larger and ever larger genera or classes until we discover them to be bound by intimate and indestructible ties to the vast sum of things we call the universe. Every division and sub-division is capable of being brought down from large genera to single particulars, many of which range themselves as items in our humble, every-day environment. Under this aspect they take on a dignity which before they did not possess in our eyes. We

seem to grasp the revelation that nothing is insignificant; and that even the grain of dust beneath our feet is, equally with the most imposing phenomenon, one of the characters in that stupendous document which we call simply the world, but which is in reality the message of the Creator to the created, and which it is the problem of life to decipher.

This conception of the world or universe as a unit will be especially valuable as a means of rescuing us from a demoralizing narrowness of view while engaged in the contemplation of any subject, outlining, as it necessarily does, the humblest object of attention against the limitless canvas of the All. This gives one pre-eminently the sense of background, of perspective, and one, in tackling a subject, insensibly seeks to establish a pedigree for it—to trace a chain of antecedents of which it is at once the latest term and modern representative.

This is also called the historic sense and has received great development in the last few decades of our time.

According to this mode of treatment one traces his subject back to its earliest appearance on the stage of history and unearths its most rudimentary form, oftentimes through many varied and elusive metamorphoses.

For example if a man have to give an address on Money in general, he will not be content with discussing the phe-

nomenon merely under its present aspect, but will go as far back in time as human record can take him and detect its source in the most primitive analogical device, proceeding gradually with its modifications through the ages down to our own day.

If Slavery is the subject to be treated it must be proceeded with in the same manner; its origin in the dim past, its varying forms with the progress of the ages, its relations to war, to domestic, and political life, to mining, manufacture, agriculture, and colonization; its contributions to the establishment of caste, to the propagation of new religions and the influence of changes in its conditions upon political institutions and the whole political structure of society, etc., etc., must be carefully outlined and then developed with a fullness of detail proportioned to the contemplated scope of the address. A habit must be deliberately formed of looking at one's subject from all sides and exploiting its every aspect.

All these things, however, are supplied to the reader by already existing records and works. He has so far furnished nothing from his own store. His work has no originality. A man's intellectual genius is notoriously measured by his power of modifying the material he takes in hand, whatever that may be. There is a very close analogy be-

tween the mind and the stomach. As the latter in its normal condition is capable of infinitely modifying the matter ingested, so has the former under the most favorable conditions of function an unlimited power of reshaping the material presented to it. However, a perfect mind is a far more rare phenomenon than a perfect stomach, rare as this is said to have become. But from the most highly developed faculty to the least, the graduations are infinite, as are likewise the degrees of plasticity of the mind, that is to say its capacity for development under training or experience. It not infrequently happens that an individual displaying at first very feeble power for combining and shaping, rapidly increases this power under training; whereas another who starts out with exceptional faculty makes little or no perceptible progress under training. It must be confessed, however, that instances of this constitution are not so frequently met with as those of the former type; and no man can tell what is in him until he has explored the territory of psychical function that is his. Now, in this field exploring means subjecting to exercise and discipline.

In order to make any personal contribution to a subject the data of which has been mainly supplied by the research of others, it is necessary either to have fine natural parts, to have had oneself a great range of experience and observation

in the same line, or to have a natural aptitude for intending one's mind upon the object of thought and by skilfully correlating it with other ideas, of eliciting from it new concepts, new comments, new theories or new analogies. So that the student would do well to form the habit of brooding over his subject-matter, collating it with ever new elements so as, if possible, to establish valuable and hitherto unsuspected connections between them.

It would be extremely difficult to explain in detail just how this is done. It is like a certain mode of breathing taught musical students for purposes of vocalization. It is in vain that the teacher explains, for some time you are unable even to approach the process required of you and you begin to despair. Your teacher, however, who has been through the mill herself, laughs and assures you that you have but to keep on trying and "it will come to you." Now this is perfectly analogous to what happens to the student who resolutely applies himself to the mysteries of composition. He has but to dig away at daily exercise with his injunctions as steadily before his mind as the pillar of fire before the hosts of Israel in the Exodus. These daily studies are to be supplemented by at least one weekly exercise on the platform before an audience composed of fellow-students. For all the solitary study in the world will not avail to give one the

ability to command one's rhetorical resources in an actual emergency. The function of the teacher is to train his pupil so that he may be able to meet the verbal exigencies of life with ready expedients. This training will include the word drill which has been outlined in our discussion of conversation; and especial attention to definiteness, accuracy and coherency of statement is earnestly enjoined as a prerequisite to success in the public enunciation of thought.

It may not be an irrelevant conclusion to forestall here a number of questions which usually arise in the mind of the incipient student of speech.

Is SLANG admissible in a public address or in conversation?

To this it may be briefly replied that slang is by no means to be indiscriminately barred. The fact does not appear to be sufficiently appreciated that slang is of more than one type. It will suffice for our purpose to distribute slang terms into two main classes of which one includes those words and phrases that have by some accident, error or slovenliness of speech acquired an outrageous extension of meaning which in many cases is rendered even more objectionable by the inherent vulgarity and irrelevance of the expression itself. Such a term is the word, rats! It is used by the ignorant and vulgar to show contempt for the

opinions, sentiments, or observations of their interlocutor. As it is used indiscriminately for every shade and degree of that emotion and is even extended so as to cover emotions of impatience, regret, disappointment and disgust, it is plain that far from being an expression at all, it is actually a device for evading the task of expression. Now, as verbal deficiency is already the curse of American culture at its best, the reader may judge whether it would have been possible to hit upon a more effective means of riveting a social infirmity upon an unhappy people. It is to such libel upon speech that an illustrious countryman referred when he called slang "the riotous medium of the underlanguaged." Such an infraction of the decencies and proprieties of human utterance should not be tolerated in any case; and when it is further considered that it absolutely destroys the faculty of definite statement and discriminative epithet and phrase by the constant use of terms of such wide and misty generality that they have become absolutely insignificant, the perils of such indulgence become painfully evident. Another prolific source of verbal mutilation is the awkward habit which some people have of overworking certain items of their vocabulary. Some misguided enthusiasts find everything "grand," or "magnificent," or "splendid." The boarding-school girl sprinkles her conversation liberally

with "lovely," "heavenly," "sweet," or "dear." The dominie in "Guy Mannering," who exclaimed, "prodigious!" on all occasions, in and out of season, is an eminent type of this class of blunderers. The word "nice," as used by the average person to indicate any mode of excellence whatever, to serve, that is, as a general term of advantage, has probably done more harm to American culture than even the most sagacious dream of. Such words are emphatically pests. They are indeed "rats!" for they are the very vermin of language and should be summarily routed. Young people who respect themselves should show reverence for their mother tongue as the august medium of their intellectual and spiritual life. They should make it a point of honor to make use of such terms only as distinctly characterize the object to which they are applied. The language must fit the thought as the man's vestment fits his body. The contempt with which we should cover him who would be so neglectful of public decency as to go about in a gunny sack, belongs equally to the slovenly speaker who does not deem his thoughts worthy of being clothed in properly fitting garments of language, but flings over them the first loose, outworn or insignificant phrase he finds lying at hand.

But all slang terms do not come under this category. The other class into which we distributed them is of a far

less reprehensible type than that we have just discussed. Indeed, it includes a class of phrases which are at times to be recommended for their imaginative qualities. They constitute oftentimes a vivid picture and tend greatly to relieve the blankness of an abstract statement by introducing into it the element of the concrete. They are homely tropes or flowers of rhetoric and have the merit of supplying ornament under its least pretentious guise. "I felt I was up against a new game," "You are barking up the wrong tree," "They'll kick," "Spin a yarn," "He's half seas over," and other similar idioms may properly be called slang (or cant) because they illustrate the extension to general parlance of phrases that were originally technical to a particular walk of life. Even in the case of these latter it must be confessed that while they possess force and picturesqueness, they do not strictly characterize. They are really the poetry of conversation and narrative, because, like poetry, they suggest, whereas true prose proceeds by actual statement. Therefore, though they may be considered as the legitimate, occasional refreshment of a mind weary of abstraction, they should not be allowed too often to trench upon the province of more definite predication.

To what an extent is QUOTATION allowable? This is one of those questions which each man is tempted to answer

according to his temperament. The present writer is inclined rather to discourage the practice. In the hands of the unwary it is apt to become a disintegrating force, by forestalling both thought and expression. As *Hudibras*

“Could not ope

His mouth but out there flew a trope.”

So some people can hardly embark on a train of thinking but other people's thoughts and experiences come flocking to the fore court of their consciousness clamoring for recognition and usurping the field of original thought. De Quincey caustically stigmatizes a certain individual as one whose mind was constantly “infested with rags and tags of verse.” On the whole it is probably the wiser part to eschew quotations unless, like good poetry, they are inevitable, that is irresistibly suggested by the matter in hand. Where the practice is not the mark of mental feebleness and diffusiveness already existing, constant addiction to it soon becomes the source of these untoward conditions. It is indispensable to the best achievement that one should first learn to use his own mind instead of superseding or forestalling mental process by the use of the products of other men's faculty.

What is the legitimate role of the ANECDOTE in public speaking?

The introduction of the anecdote is another mode of supplying the much needed element of the concrete in the rather dry region of that abstract statement which forms the staple of exposition. But it must be promptly added that those who resort to anecdote as an expedient of illustration do not all handle it with equal felicity. The apposite-ness, the vivacity and force of this device in the hands of certain speakers amounts to genius while at the touch of others their effect seems in some inexplicable manner to dissolve and vanish. Of the anecdote it may be said in general, as of the quotation, that it is best when inevitable—when the proposition just enunciated bears such striking analogy to it that it seems of its own accord to spring from the chambers of memory and to range itself by natural affinity to the abstract truth to which it bears a vital connection. The study of the speeches of Lincoln would no doubt afford much light on the mode of handling this most effective expedient of rhetoric.

The concluding words of this chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the time-limits of an address. These are regulated either organically or arbitrarily. That is to say that the speaker may impose his own limits or they may be imposed upon him by others. The organic limits will be those which the nature of the subject and the scope of dis-

cussion naturally dictate. These, however, must also to some extent be regulated by the character and temper of the audience. No speaker can afford to weary his hearers; he must be on the alert to detect signs of wavering attention, in which case he must either shorten his performance or by some legitimate oratorical device refresh their jaded spirits. Insensibility to the mental moods and conditions of his audience is the unpardonable sin of the orator who usually pays the penalty for it by the disasters of a brief and inglorious career.

Another and, if possible, a more unpardonable form of insensibility is that of the speaker who oversteps the time limits inexorably fixed by the schedule of a program. Such a person becomes by such an act guilty of a social outrage too flagrant to admit of being adequately characterized on a page which acknowledges the restraining sway of courtesy. To take even five minutes more time than is allowed you is to rob someone else of that much of his privilege who has either to curtail his (no doubt already short) speech so as absolutely to disfigure it beyond the possibility of delivery or to encroach upon his successor's time, who in turn has to trench upon his, and so on in a vicious circle of invasion and confusion which not unfrequently suffices to wreck the entertainment.

When once one accepts an invitation to speak where a number of others display their talent, it is indispensable to observe the time-limits attached to the address. Any transgression of them betrays ignorance of the etiquette of such an occasion, inexpertness in laying out, and planning the scope of one's address, or a gross insensibility to the claims of others. This last is an especially unhappy feature of the case, because a public speaker in a greater or less degree sets up as a public teacher; and how can he be credited with valuable doctrines who shows himself deficient in the primary social intuitions?

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